





*W. E. Gladstone*

*St. Deiniol's Library  
Hawarden Church*

*Founded by  
The Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone*

18

1

E  
13  
79

HAWARDEN

CANCEL

4

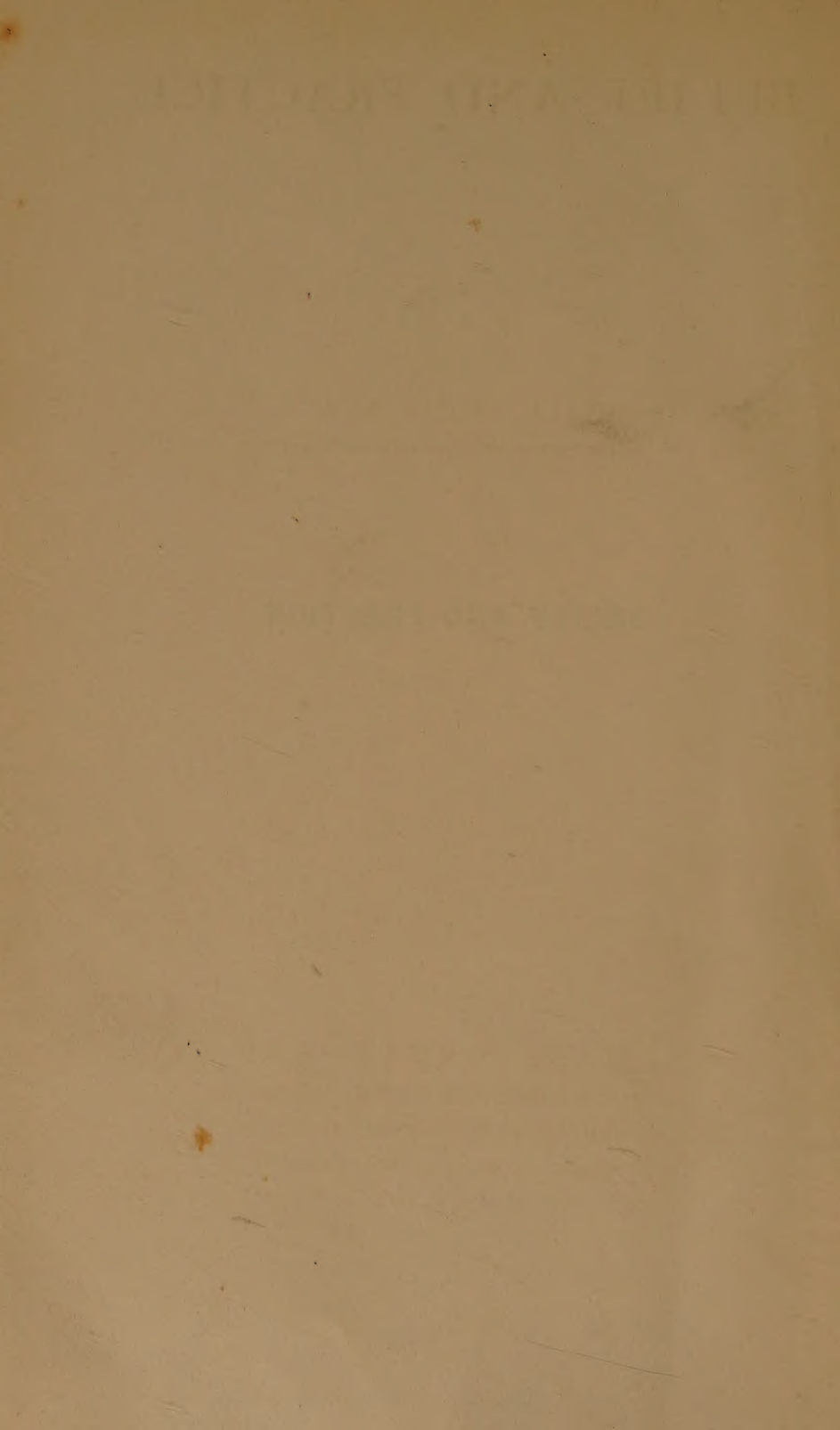


Christianity (Xian. doctrine)

303



BELIEF AND PRACTICE



# BELIEF AND PRACTICE

BY

WILL SPENS, M.A.

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1915



47442

ST. DEINIOL'S LIBRARY  
HAWARDEN.

## PREFACE.

THESE lectures were the outcome of a suggestion that I should throw into such a form the substance of a variety of conversations concerning institutional religion. They were delivered in this College during the Michaelmas term, 1914, to a small audience of my colleagues and my pupils.

One point requires some slight explanation. In all except the first of these lectures I adhered to a distinction between Modernism and Liberalism, which a number of Liberal Theologians seem anxious to ignore, but which seems to me to be fundamental. The Modernists made clear their acceptance of Catholic experience and their belief that any sound theology must embody this acceptance. The extent of Catholicism, its parallels in other religions, and its power to stimulate piety and devotion, appeared to them to indicate that Catholic Dogma sought to explain, however inadequately, religious experience which was both real and normative. The Modernists owed the conceptions, with which they tried to erect a better system, in a large degree to Liberal Protestant thought ; but they felt bound to explain, and

to preserve, much that Protestant Liberalism began by denying.

I have to acknowledge many obligations ; to various writers, or friends, from whom I have borrowed arguments ; to the Dean of Newcastle, N.S.W., to the Rev. E. C. Hoskyns, and others, who have read these lectures, for much valuable criticism ; and especially to Mr. Geoffrey G. Butler for revising my manuscript as well as for reading the proofs.

W. S.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE.

## SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

### THE PLACE OF THEOLOGY.

#### LECTURE I.

The validity of religion is not necessarily bound up with the literal truth of particular doctrines (p. 3); but theology still tends to make exceptions to this view (p. 4); it is difficult to find a basis for assuming these to exist (p. 4); the controversy is complicated by confusion of meaning (p. 7); the issue is not the truth or falsity of particular doctrines, but the nature of the data of theology (p. 7). The pastoral problem may be inevitable, but can be minimized (p. 8); and the liberal synthesis is open to dispute (p. 11); the fundamental problem in theology is the relative, and actual, validity of different methods and resulting systems (p. 12).

#### LECTURE II.

The claim that an infallible tradition exists can be attractively expressed (p. 17), but cannot be accepted (p. 18); Liberal Protestantism presents an alternative, but fails to account for religious experience which appears undeniable (p. 20). Father Tyrrell and others have regarded dogmas as summaries of experience, and have suggested a parallel between Theology and Science (p. 22); the underlying conception of Science is adequate as far as it goes, but more may be claimed (p. 25); and if a parallel exists between Theology and Science this further claim possesses great significance (p. 29).

#### LECTURE III.

The dependence of religious experience on belief does not vitiate a parallel between Science and Theology (p. 33); but the funda-



mental assumption of the validity of religious experience requires more general treatment (p. 38); we have to consider (in the case of Christian Theism) how far the equivalent assumption possesses authority (p. 41). Both Science and our social relations supply instructive parallels (p. 41); we may trust instinct which has been educated in the successful relation of wise and diverse experience (p. 44); under these conditions both fundamental instinctive affirmations and the resulting system will be open to correction, but will embody and express a real insight (p. 47).

#### LECTURE IV.

No more is required, in the case of religious axioms, than such validity (p. 51). Catholic theology expresses a wide range of experience (p. 53); it appears to be an exceptionally reliable guide to experience (p. 54); Protestantism represents a necessary reaction, but seems inferior in these respects (p. 56); here and in regard to other religions, the best Catholic thought is the best available synthesis (p. 58); finally, Catholic theology successfully relates not merely wide experience but diverse experience (p. 59). The fundamental axioms, which we are thus led to accept, are not without a considerable measure of general verification (p. 61).

#### LECTURE V.

We must regard the fundamental authority of dogma as consisting in the experience which it embodies (p. 67); this implies, however, that any alternative synthesis must mediate this experience and, also, that we have reason for a general acceptance of the Catholic system of thought (p. 68). The errors of theology are the result of excessive dogmatism but do not affect its fundamental validity in its own field (p. 69); but our acceptance concerns primarily a general system and method rather than any particular doctrine (p. 72); and, even as a whole, the system is not necessarily final (p. 73). Further, the authority for any particular doctrine depends on a free consensus (p. 73); this constitutes an objection to the Roman system (p. 74); as does also the importance of Apostolic theology (p. 76); the Anglican position is more sound fundamentally (p. 77); but is open to real dangers (p. 78).

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

## LECTURE VI.

The literary relics of Apostolic Christianity are of special importance (p. 85); of the three main theories which profess to account for these, Liberal Protestantism fails to allow for the religious experience embodied in Catholic doctrine (p. 86); and is in collision with modern emphasis on the eschatological element in the Gospels (p. 88); Modernism, in its best forms, provides a more possible theology, on the lines of a diffused incarnation (p. 89); but involves certain *ad hoc* explanations of features in the records (p. 91); represents a break with the development of theological thought (p. 96); and shows no power to deal with an important range of religious experience (p. 97).

## LECTURE VII.

The traditional doctrine of the Incarnation is a third explanation, but has been criticized in various directions: on the ground that Christian experience is inadequate on such a view (p. 101); because such an Incarnation appears to imply a catastrophic and intrusive element (p. 103); because it is supposed that the moral value of our Lord's example is destroyed if He was divine (p. 109); and because of errors in His teaching, especially about the second coming (p. 109). We have to consider the authority and nature of teaching as to the latter (p. 110); the resulting problem as to our Lord's knowledge (p. 111) and the bearing of this in other directions (p. 115).

## LECTURE VIII.

Further objections have been based on ethical grounds: our Lord's actions are criticized (p. 119); also His teaching, as being based on wrong principles (p. 122); or as applying sound principles crudely in regard, for example, to charity (p. 123), and in regard to non-resistance (p. 127); objections are also based on historical criticisms of the Gospels (p. 130). These objections seem inconclusive and their consideration often strengthens the traditional view (p. 133 *and seriatim*); it seems reasonable to suppose that a solution should be sought along the lines of the latter (p. 133); but this will probably require somewhat drastic development (p. 135).

## TWO ILLUSTRATIVE CONTROVERSIES

## LECTURE IX

Christian thought has tended to draw exaggerated conclusions as to Scripture inspiration (p. 137), but the great Bible societies and recently (p. 140) and in particular, the great Bible societies (p. 141) and Christian thought has insisted, although wrongly and not exclusively (p. 142). The necessary qualifications are, however, not confined to such a controversy as this controversy with doctrinal position in regard to the doctrine (p. 143) and not to certain qualifications, we have reason to believe that prayers for the dead (p. 145) are contained in the pages of the Bible (p. 146) we have no right to modify our conception of Scripture without allowing for the resulting effect in such a controversy (p. 147). The Scripture presents another and more important question (p. 148) a systematic controversy does not involve a logical conclusion (p. 149).

## LECTURE X

Positive Christian doctrine is in fact necessary to us though (p. 151), but the Christian conception of the Scripture seems likely to have degenerated in our Lord's teaching (p. 152). The reason of the mistake (p. 153) and St. Paul's own teaching (p. 154) and *epistolary generalism*. The great danger is the dogmatism and is not necessarily inconsistent (p. 155). The question arises as to whether the Scripture is in a sense quite sufficient, as is the conclusion reached by our Lord's teaching that Christianity is a social science (p. 156). That general conclusion leads and the scriptural evidence requires an affirming answer (p. 157).

## LECTURE XI

Since the official position of the Churchmen appears to have been the same, the same, however, between the two, and in result, it is assumed as that which determines that separation of which had effect which arose out of the same separation (p. 158). It consequently we must regard the struggle as a separation which constitutes the Church, as changing to the meaning of a new property (p. 159). There is involved a such a long that process of

language and thought (p. 173), and the conclusion is not affected if we hold an object to be fundamentally more than a complex of properties (p. 174). The idea of a Real Presence is implied by such a view (p. 177); as is also insistence on the Eucharistic Sacrifice (p. 180); but in each case careful statement is required.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

### LECTURE XII.

The institutional element in religion possesses great importance for a variety of reasons (p. 188); and as leading to a corporate religious tradition, it is now of increasing importance (p. 192). At present there is a tendency to admit this importance, but to say that no particular institutions, or particular type of institutions, have any special advantage (p. 193); this view ignores the fact that the character of the Church should find expression (p. 194) and also the value of unity (p. 196). The latter consideration is the basis of a reaction in favour of Roman Catholicism (p. 196). Such a reaction may be criticized on various subordinate grounds (p. 197) and also because it turns on an inadequate view of the Church (p. 201). The truest social analogy is provided by a nation (p. 202) and division is neither inconceivable nor necessarily final (p. 204).

### LECTURE XIII.

The analogy of a nation fails, however, to represent adequately Church government (p. 209); if a principle involved in any "Kingdom of Christ" is to find expression, the government of the Church must be, in some sense, superimposed (p. 211). This is secured if, but only if, its present government represents a development of a government having this character (p. 211). Such a character was possessed by the Apostolate (p. 212) and continuity of development has secured its retention by the threefold ministry (p. 214). Various objections can be made against such a view but they are not well founded (p. 215). It has been argued that further development provides ground for the Papal claim (p. 219); the argument is invalidated by the history of Papal authority (p. 221) and by the conditions of its exercise (p. 224).

### LECTURE XIV.

The Roman argument from the Scriptures is equally unsound (p. 227). The claim of the Anglican Church can therefore be considered



(p. 231) ; it is intrinsically strong (p. 232) and particular objections fail to contradict it (p. 234). But in various directions these objections suggest the need of development (p. 236) while much might also be done to make possible eventual union with Non-conformist bodies (p. 237). The main difficulty in respect of the latter turns on doctrinal differences, and there are obligations on Anglican thought in respect of these (p. 239). Apart from such questions, the relation of the Church and society presents a vital problem (p. 242) ; and any adequate solution must involve both full recognition of each, and clear realization that they are concerned with different ends (p. 243).

## LECTURE I.



## LECTURE I.

THERE was no religious controversy in the last half-century which possessed greater practical importance, or aroused more bitterness, than the question as to how much was involved in the acceptance of Christianity. We are familiar with the form which the answer to that question received at the hands of many opponents of religious belief. We were told that any change of belief necessarily disproved existent religion, and necessarily involved its total abandonment. That view is curiously narrow. It is only tenable if religion is regarded as a hard-drawn system of thought. If it is conceived as an imperfect but real insight, as an imperfect but growing knowledge of God, and as an imperfect but a substantial grasp of the possibilities of experience, a new attitude becomes inevitable. We must admit the possibility that this or that conception, which has to be abandoned, may have represented an advancing knowledge, and a partial apprehension of some ultimate truth.

The expression and adoption of such a view has been made easier in recent times by the movements of thought in modern science. There at least we have learnt that the value and underlying truth of a system, or of particular conceptions, are not necessarily



dependent on their literal or exhaustive accuracy. At present the problem lies mainly within the field of Christian thought. It turns on the question as to how far some such view of theology is either correct or adequate. It would be very generally admitted that neither all the statements of theology, nor all the statements in the creeds, are necessarily true in their most literal sense, but certain fundamental dogmas are held to be final; and this is more especially true at the present moment in regard to the supernatural narrative, and in regard to the Christology, which are embodied in the creeds. Nor is the distinction which is made between these dogmas and the other statements of the creed at all irrational. It has been urged that there is a very real difference between such a statement as "He ascended into heaven" and such a phrase as "Born of the Virgin Mary". In the first case the statement deals primarily with that which transcends our experience, with that which from its nature cannot be expressed in the terms evolved to describe that experience. In the other case the implied statement may be true or may be false, but language is adequate for its clear expression.

The great difficulty is to see how a basis can be found for any insistence that statements in the creeds should be regarded not merely as an approach to truth, not merely as at least valuable symbols, but as necessarily final. Various lines of approach exist to such a view. It is said that the Church possesses a character which inspires confidence in its statements. We shall be largely concerned in the next and sub-

sequent lectures with the discussion of that view, of its limitations and of its considerable justice. The point to which I wish to draw your attention at once is that what is claimed by those holding that view is not merely that the Church is such as to lead us to suppose that it has a firm grasp on truth, that it has made a real approach to truth, but that we can and must concede an oracular authority, an authority which will guarantee infallibly certain statements. Even if there is ground for belief in a real apprehension of truth, it does not follow that there is ground for acceptance of oracular infallibility ; and, as we shall see, the history of theology creates for such a view difficulties which have not been really met.

There is another line of approach which admits that the infallibility of the Church is one of tendency rather than of particular pronouncements. It is urged, however, that when you have a real movement of thought, a clearly marked tendency, the justice of this must be conceded. It is urged, for example, that we ought to recognize that such a movement as developed our present Christology must be held valid. In a very large measure that contention is sound. If we accept the view that the tradition of thought embodied in the Church represented a real movement towards truth, then it is difficult to deny that the general lines on which that movement worked were substantially correct. What has to be remembered, however, is that any such movement of thought is conditioned by those conceptions which it takes for granted. It represents, and can only represent, a movement towards the best possible

expression in terms of those conceptions. Christian theology took for granted a conception of the supernatural, and a resulting belief in a supernatural narrative, which are now in question. It is perfectly possible to hold that the Christology of Chalcedon represented the best view of God which could find expression in terms of a supernatural Incarnation, and at the same time to question that Christology on the basis of questioning its fundamental conception. It may be true that if a supernatural Incarnation took place, God is such that it must have taken place in this manner ; and at the same time it may be true that the fundamental assumption requires further and substantial justification.

Another and different basis is secured by placing the Church on a frankly confessional basis ; by saying that the Church consists of those people who accept a number of particular opinions. Such a procedure is always possible. What is in question is its wisdom. We are concerned to secure a rational and substantial authority for the acceptance of those views we believe to be true. A rational and substantial authority must largely depend on the fact that those who are free to consider certain questions, and who are competent to consider these questions, agree as to the truth of some particular views. Now if it is felt that the Church is such as to guarantee the great value of its experience and its considerable apprehension of the truth, you have a tendency, and must have a tendency, for men to accept without discrimination that confessional basis on which the

Church sees fit to insist. Obviously it is necessary that there should be some fundamental intellectual assumption which must be a condition of accepting institutional Christianity. There must be at least the assumption that its intellectual expression embodies a real movement towards truth and a real if imperfect insight. But if you insist that the possibility shall not be freely considered as to whether this insight has found expression in symbols, then you cut at the root of rational authority for the retention of any particular doctrine.

The whole difficulty of controversy is complicated by the considerable confusion between the senses in which men use such a statement as that a supernatural Christology is essential to Christian experience. On the one hand you can have the view with which I have been mainly concerned, the view that an acceptance of a supernatural Christology and of particular miracles is an acceptance which must precede any acceptance of Christianity. On the other hand it may be meant that if we admit Christian experience we shall find, or at any rate time will show, that it can only be explained by such hypotheses. With the latter view we shall be concerned in subsequent lectures, but it is partly because I wish to urge its acceptance, and because I wish to see it placed on surer foundations, that I believe it to be essential that freedom should be given to consider and to reconsider its validity. The fundamental issue is not whether certain doctrines are true or false, but as to our conception of doctrine. We have to consider whether theology

should not regard, as its data, experience rather than propositions. Revelation is none the less real if we conceive it as given in experience, and especially in the experience of the Apostles and Apostolic witnesses. It is not minimized if we regard it as a revelation of, rather than about, God. On the other hand, such a view enables theology to take advantage of methods, of which the value is widely recognized. We may even find, I wish to urge in later lectures that we shall find, that by treating dogmas as inferences from experience we give to theology a far greater authority. We are bound to regard particular doctrines as matters for discussion; but we give to our conclusions a far greater significance.

The great practical difficulty, if such a course is to be pursued, is the problem thus created for pastoral theology. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the hardness of the problem if simple souls have to be told that the supernatural Christology and narratives are wrong. It is not greatly easier if they have to be told that these may be wrong. It is possible that such a problem is inevitable. It will not be the only, nor the most bitter, difficulty which has arisen from time to time in the propagation or the maintenance of religion. But it seems possible also that more might be done, than is done, by those who feel the necessity for the freer consideration of such questions. In subsequent lectures I propose to attempt to work out the conception of doctrine which in some degree I have already indicated. I propose, however, to go on to deal with problems which are



regarded as secondary, and which are not infrequently omitted in any discussion of a fundamental position. I wish to deal in later lectures with our relation to the Church invisible, with the Sacraments and with the institutional Church.

I propose to do so for two subordinate reasons. In the first place, religion is too dependent on its institutional expression to make it desirable to omit a discussion of this, in relation to fundamental conceptions. In the second place, I have a special reason for dealing briefly with devotional practice concerning the departed, and in a more definite and technical manner with Eucharistic theology, and with the problems of the institutional Church. It is commonly assumed that any departure from a traditional conception of theology must involve either further abandonment of proved devotional practices, or their retention on a purely pragmatic basis. I believe the very opposite to be the case, and that a sounder conception of theology should enable us to embody practices which have appeared to depend on untenable doctrines, but which are found to result in a rich devotional life.

My main reason lies, however, in the consideration of the practical problem which I have just indicated. That problem very largely arises from the psychological advantage which results if men have some concrete object, or some concrete belief, for their acceptance. If a concrete and definite narrative is to come in question, then it will be a great practical gain if we can extend our claim for the institutional Church

and for institutional religion. If men have to be in doubt as to the *explanation* of institutional Christianity it is important that, as far as possible, that Christianity should have concrete expression, and that, as far as possible, its claims should be both full and clear. I do not urge for an instant that claims should be made simply because they are convenient, unless they can be related in some satisfactory system, unless they can be placed on some sound intellectual basis. I would urge that those who feel bound to insist on the necessity for the reconsideration of present beliefs, do well to be peculiarly careful to lose no chance of placing on firm bases anything which may help to alleviate the difficulties they are creating.

In regard also to the nature of the discussion, a good deal more might be done, than is sometimes the case, to minimize the difficulty. Belief in one's own methods and conclusions finds its best expression in their careful defence, rather than in their vigorous assertion ; the more so, when many are still unconvinced of the adequacy of the methods in question. It is possible to regard that lack of conviction as merely the fruit of conservatism ; but, even so, a sense of intellectual decency should secure that it is met with argument, rather than abused. In other fields such a remark would be obviously superfluous. These fields present less reason for caution ; there is, in general, no great need to consider the simple-minded, and schisms of thought are far less likely to prove lasting. If all Liberal theologians would follow the path of some of their colleagues, in still regarding disputed

methods as a matter for discussion, the whole situation would be greatly improved. If their views are correct, they will prevail none the less ; while opposition would be more easily conciliated, and those who have pastoral duties would be far better able to make necessary adjustments.

This much might be said, even if it was clear that the methods in question were adequate. It is not clear ; nor, I shall be concerned to urge, is it probable. The Liberals' tendency to ignore the proved devotional values of traditional practice and traditional belief constitutes more than a practical difficulty. It is a serious ground for doubting the adequacy of their method. The tradition of Liberal thought in theology is impressive for its learning, its honesty, and its extent. It is recognized, or at any rate it is assumed, that traditional theology, if not less learned, is at least less courageous. It must in any case be conceded that there is not that practical freedom of reconsideration, which is required to give full value to its particular conclusions. We have on the one hand the great tradition of Catholic thought reaching certain views, and, on the other, a tradition of Liberal thought reaching different conclusions. There are, as I have indicated, certain grounds which deprive the Catholic tradition of its full authority. But it is more than possible that the competitive tradition is still less sound, in view of its tendency to ignore experience, and to brush this aside, rather than to make a main test of its theories their power to find a satisfactory basis for actual experience. We have to ask whether the

traditional system, with all its faults and limitations, is not more firmly based in a closer relation to such experience ; and we have to approach particular problems in the light of a decision on that main issue.

In theology, as elsewhere, it is largely true that those who work with the same method and adopt the same assumptions reach the same conclusions. We are in consequence less concerned with the arguments about particular problems than with fundamental questions of method and assumption. Few men can hope to do more than to advance the studies of some particular school, and they are concerned not merely to do their individual best, but to work in the best tradition. And if for the student the fundamental problem is the legitimate authority of this or that tradition of thought, that problem is still more crucial in the case of the ordinary man. Few men, other than students, can give more than a very limited effort to the formation of their opinions on particular points. They have to choose between relying on a very limited effort to form such opinions, and acceptance of the general conclusions of some school of thought, whose method and success commands their confidence. That results in a necessary and proper acceptance of authority in every field. We have not passed from an age in which men have given up reliance on authority in respect of their beliefs, but to an age in which any general exercise of such reliance is peculiar to other fields than religion. It is difficult to exaggerate the amount of faith involved in the ordinary man's acceptance of the conclusions of science.

In religion, however, the dependence on authority is necessarily greater. It is possible to take full advantage of the electric light without accepting any particular belief as to the nature of electricity. In the case of religion, there is little which is comparable to such a condition. You cannot secure the advantages of prayer ; of religious practice ; of, for example, the sacramental system ; apart from some belief as to their basis and implications. I shall be concerned in a later lecture with the question as to how far this dependence on belief invalidates religious experience. For the moment I would simply urge that, if such experience is still valid, this dependence on belief must necessarily involve, for the ordinary man, an exceptional reliance on authority. What the ordinary man is concerned to do is to see that his reliance is not exaggerated, and that it is given to a tradition of thought which has substantial claims on his acceptance.





## LECTURE II.



## LECTURE II.

WE have, of course, no lack of theological systems which claim to be authoritative. Indeed, as I have indicated, an initial problem is created by the fact that an extreme claim is made in certain cases. We are told that this or that tribunal or consensus should be regarded as final in all its pronouncements. You get such a view, in a highly developed form, in the case of the Roman Church ; and even that extreme claim is capable of attractive expression at the hands of its best apologists. We are told that the Roman Church is heir to a peculiarly rich heritage of spiritual experience and spiritual culture. We are told that, amid much admitted superstition, characteristic Christian piety and devotion are pre-eminently produced. We are told that the official theological pronouncements of the Roman Church are never merely the work of theologians, and could not in practice be made unless the response of piety and devotion was assured. It is pointed out to us that in many fields of ordinary life we trust pre-eminent experience and pre-eminent power ; and it is urged that a greater claim is here.

I do not want now to criticize that argument in detail : later, in various directions, I shall have occasion to do so ; but, however much one can

criticize, it is difficult to deny that its premises have a large measure of justice. The whole position is, however, open to general objection. We know that Catholic theology has had to recede in various directions. In various directions, it has made statements which it has asserted to be truths guaranteed by ecclesiastical authority ; and these statements have proved to be incorrect. We have seen the assertion and the abandonment of a particular account of creation, and the assertion and the practical abandonment of a doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Scripture. If there has been regress of this description in certain directions in the past, it is always possible, and always probable, that there will be further regress in the future. It is urged in many quarters, with much honesty and much ability, that Christian history should share the fate of the traditional account of creation and of the traditional conception of inspiration. The question inevitably arises as to whether further regress is possible in this and other directions. No real solution has been found by attempts to define the limits of ecclesiastical authority. We are told that this is confined to faith and morals, that these must be very strictly conceived, but that within this field authority is reliable, and past error occurred only in trespass beyond it. We have still to ask whether, for example, we can claim that Christian history is *certainly* included in the sphere of faith and morals. It is urged that the substantial accuracy of the traditional narrative of our Lord's life is an essential to Christian faith. We have to remember that the same was previously asserted, in



much the same terms and with equal sincerity, in regard to a particular account of creation, and in regard to a particular doctrine of inspiration.

Apart from the question of further regress in some particular direction, we have to meet the wider objections suggested by these and other facts. As our knowledge of religious psychology increases, we find more and more a subjective element in religious experience, and such a discovery cuts right across any mechanical and oracular conception of authority. Again, an appeal to our trust is greatly weakened, greatly less impressive, when it is definitely confined to questions where no check is available. Still more is this so if the claim was once made in a wider field, and only the advance of other knowledge led to its restriction. It is difficult to deny that this has been the case. It may be true that in certain ages of the Church's history, neither, for example, the account of creation which had to be abandoned, nor the doctrine of verbal inspiration, were officially defined; but it is none the less true that these doctrines were eventually defined, directly or by implication, and that in such fields Christian theology very definitely claimed to speak with authority. Retreat from those fields was secured, not by the further advance of specifically Christian thought, but by the advance of secular knowledge.

The *a priori* argument is, of course, used that we might expect exceptional assistance in a residual field where secular knowledge is incapable of providing us with information. Such an argument is open to serious

objection. The question remains as to how much is really covered. Further, any *a priori* argument, of this description, assumes a knowledge of how God must act, and in what conditions He must place us, which is, to say the least, somewhat presumptuous. It would be legitimate, and would only be legitimate, if we could say that we should expect what we find in our condition—if we could say, for example, that we should expect evil and pain in the character and degree which we find to exist. Finally, the argument breaks down also in another direction. It is essential to it that more ordinary methods should be inadequate; and it loses all force if it can be claimed that methods, proved elsewhere, are capable of use in the field in question.

Such a claim is made in various directions. Apart from still more sceptical systems of thought, it is made very notably by what is called "Liberal Theology". It may be that the proper conclusion is a transfer of our allegiance to that particular tradition of thought, but such a course has its own difficulties. The ordinary man is apt to point to some good specimen of the abbé or slum ritualist or old-fashioned evangelical and to say that *there* is what he means by real religion; and, while he might have no hesitation in saying that their conceptions were impossible, he realizes the relation between these conceptions and the lives which he admires. He feels unable to believe in the doctrines of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, and of Redemption; but he is disposed to conclude that these doctrines are peculiarly fruitful in Christian piety

and devotion. It is easy to point out that false ideas may give encouragement, and so assistance : the facts hardly warrant the conclusion that Catholic belief is merely more fruitful than unconvinced Liberalism. They suggest rather that it is the better guide to spiritual experience. And, speaking generally, whatever view we take of the intellectual character of those doctrines which are peculiar to Catholicism, which it does not share even with orthodox Protestant belief, it seems difficult to avoid a further admission that these also minister, in a very real manner, to the spiritual life. Whether or not Catholic doctrines are adequate as philosophy or sound as history, there is, to say the least, a strong case for the view that they supply a map to the spiritual life which is unexpectedly reliable. However inadequate as explanations, their theories relate and express religious experience with peculiar success. In many directions, and over a wide field, the conditions they suggest appear to operate, and the experience they imply appears to be forthcoming.

Such a view of dogma has recently been made the basis, not merely for an assertion of the inadequacy of Liberal theology, but of a defence of traditional thought. What is new in that defence is not, of course, an insistence on the verification which that thought finds in experience, but the conception of theology to which this is related, a conception which I have already indicated. Dogma is regarded primarily as an assertion and summarization of religious experience ; its value as an explanation becomes a subsequent question. We have seen

recently various attempts to outline, and in some degree to develop, that position. I do not think I am misrepresenting Mr. Rawlinson in seeing such an attempt in his essay on Authority in the recent Oxford collection, which attracted so much attention. We have another, and fuller, example in the works of Father Tyrrell. The latter emphasized the obvious parallel to science which such a view suggests ; and summed up his position by the very suggestive sentence, that the dogmas of the Church must control theology in the same way in which the facts of science control science.

It would be admitted by Liberal theologians that such a respect must be paid to past theology as is paid to past metaphysics. It would be agreed that no one could attempt with much profit to discuss theological problems, unless he was prepared to familiarize himself with the work of his predecessors. But the parallel would be to metaphysics, and to metaphysics as conceived in what many would now regard as an old-fashioned manner. It would be urged that the views advanced in the past had simply their authority in the arguments with which they were supported : and even this much would be not unjustly depreciated, by insistence that past theological thought had been very largely influenced by oracular conceptions of ecclesiastical authority, and, as much or more, by a conception of the Scriptures which is certainly illegitimate. Father Tyrrell claimed something more. He claimed a parallel not to metaphysics but to science. He did not live to develop

that position, at any rate he never published any satisfactory development ; and it is to a development of that position, and to a criticism of it in certain particulars, that I propose to turn.

What was no doubt in Father Tyrrell's mind in the phrase which I have quoted, was the truth that the theories of science have their significance in large measure, and have their primary authority, in the fact that they express, relate, and enable us to predict, available experience. It is, for example, a well-known theory of science that all space is filled with some medium, which transmits light in the form of waves. At any rate until fairly recently, that medium was regarded as in some sense comparable to an elastic jelly. Even when that view, in that older form, was generally held, the fundamental significance of the theory lay in its power to relate, express, and predict actual experience in regard to the phenomena of light. Suppose that we could conceive a being, which had been able to examine that medium not merely in regard to the vibrations in it, but, let us say, as we can experiment on some lump of jelly placed on the table in front of us. It would not necessarily have followed, indeed it would certainly not have followed, that his experience would confirm the view that this medium could be regarded as a jelly. On the other hand, that does not mean that the theory ought to have been rejected. The content of the theory consisted in its power, and, at that time, in its peculiar power, to enable us to predict and to relate certain experience.



The particular theory which I have used as an illustration has, in point of fact, been modified away from the cruder form to which I have referred. But in various instances, for example in regard to solutions of salts in water, we still have to be content with theories which we know cannot be an accurate account of what is really taking place. We have to be content with those theories because they do express and relate, and enable us to predict phenomena which we find to occur, and which appear to us of importance. The question of the truth of a scientific theory is, in short, a question which, for the scientist, is apt to take on two rather different meanings. In the first place, there is the problem as to whether the theory can be regarded as an exact account, without any element of symbol. In the second place, there is the question as to whether, regarded as a symbol, it enables us to deal with, and enables us to sum up and to assert, a range of phenomena which actually occur. Supposing you propounded to a scientist the question as to whether, say, the common theory of solutions was true: he would say, "No, it is not true in the sense which you mean," but he would also continue to retain that theory, and to state that theory in his text-books. The measure in which there can be understanding and use of the phenomena depends on its being possible to find some conception which will predict them; and in the degree in which this is secured it may be essential to retain a conception, even if that conception is not satisfactory. It cannot well be abandoned until the discovery of a more satis-



factory theory, which summarizes experience as well or better.

For reasons I have indicated Father Tyrrell claimed that the great historic dogmas must also be regarded as theories which express experience, and experience of a very general and important character. He urged that even if these theories were inadequate, they possessed a real value and significance. Their inadequacy must be recognized; but they must be retained until others, of a more satisfactory character, can be found to cover the same experience. Father Tyrrell did not claim any further significance for traditional theology. It is very doubtful, however, whether something more is not involved, if there really exists a parallel between science and theology.

It cannot well be maintained (although it sometimes is maintained), that science is only concerned, as between different theories, with their relative power to summarize, and to enable us to predict, certain ranges of phenomena. Imagine a theory, let us say, of solutions, which related the facts, and enabled us to predict the facts, by reference to certain fairies and hobgoblins, who moved about in the water in accordance with certain æsthetic or other purposes. I take it that your theory would not find a place in the text-books, even if in point of fact it gave a better account of those particular phenomena, if it related more of those phenomena, and enabled us to predict, somewhat more accurately, how they would occur in any given circumstances. The reason of that is a fairly simple one, but one of very considerable importance

for our purpose. It lies in the fact that the adoption of any particular theory is part of, and reacts on, a general outlook on nature, and that in the measure in which that outlook leads us to adopt true or untrue conceptions, as to how nature is likely to act, in that measure the outlook is good or bad. The theory of the hobgoblins or the fairies might give you an accurate account of the particular phenomena of a particular solution, but if you started thinking about nature in that way, you would be unlikely to make any considerable progress in your attempts to bring into order, and to predict, more general phenomena. We have got to add to, and include in, the content of a scientific theory, not merely its power to rationalize particular facts, but its power to produce a sound general outlook.

There is a further point. If you take any one of these particular theories, or if you take any of the more important of these particular theories, it is no uncommon experience to find that, evolved to bring into order one set of facts, they prove capable of dealing with some other set of facts of a widely different character. Perhaps the best illustration of that lies in the theory of an all-pervading medium to which I have already referred. Evolved to deal with the phenomenon of light, it proved that certain modifications made it at once capable of dealing with electricity, and also of dealing better with the phenomenon of light itself. Now, when such an extension is found to be possible, and when at various points in a general outlook you find that views are

capable of such unexpected extensions, there is a strong presumption that such success is not merely accidental. You have the right to suppose that you have achieved a general outlook which in some degrees embodies insight.

There is yet another feature in the progress of science, which is highly relevant in this connexion. As a matter of history, its most fundamental theories have been very generally arrived at, not by taking all the facts, and by trying any number of theories and finding one which would fit ; but by the instinct of some particular scientific genius who felt that this or that theory must be true, that this or that generalization must hold ; then made experiments, and found that those experiments confirmed his theory. Well, if that is so, it points to the fact that in the field of science, at any rate, it is possible for the educated instinct, the educated sense of fitness, to acquire an insight in advance of verification. Such insight is, no doubt, at its best incomplete ; but it is important to note that such insight exists in a considerable degree ; and it is the more important to note it, because we have in science, as elsewhere, certain fundamental conceptions which have never been completely verified, and are not capable of complete verification.

The most obvious illustration is, of course, the scientific belief in the uniformity of nature. For the relation of all the facts of which we have had experience, and with which we are concerned, it will make no difference whether you conceive that things

are going to go on, as they have gone on, for ever ; or whether you conceive that the laws which govern them are going to cease to operate the day after to-morrow. On the other hand, the latter view would be rejected as intolerable by almost any scientist for two reasons which are really interdependent : in the first place, because it contradicts his sense of fitness ; and, in the second place, because of its whole psychological reaction on his general view. This would be in the direction of an outlook which would be calculated to retard, rather than to advance, the relation and co-ordination of the facts with which he has to deal. It is not possible, however, to maintain that such a fundamental conception as the Doctrine of Uniformity rests on more than that psychological basis, that it issues from anything except a psychological process : and if this be so, and if the acceptance of this, and other such conceptions, be legitimate, then there is implied that the psychological process in question is worthy of considerable trust ; and the proved value of the educated sense of fitness in lesser matters serves to justify such an assumption.

If such a view of science as I have tried to put before you is at all correct, then its theories have a wider significance and authority than is contemplated in Father Tyrrell's dictum. They represent not merely summarization of facts, but the achievement of an outlook which is capable of general application and involves a certain insight. The theories of science may be regarded as symbols ; but if so, their value is more than accidental. They must constitute

an apprehension of the reality behind experience, even if an apprehension which represents this reality in symbols, rather than describes it accurately. Further, the sense of fitness appears to be educated by experience, and in the formation of a general outlook, so as to make its instincts increasingly reliable, and to provide a legitimate basis for fundamental assumptions. If a parallel exists between theology and science the importance of all this is obvious. Dogma will not only possess an immediate significance in the experience which it embodies and expresses. In the measure in which wide and diverse experience is embodied and related, theology will acquire a further value, and a possible basis for its fundamental assumptions.

We have to consider the legitimacy of the parallel; to carry further the analysis; and to seek to estimate the justice, and limitations, of such conclusions. Before doing so, I wish to indicate one general implication, if any such view can be established. There is perhaps no branch of thought where the influence of presuppositions is inevitably greater than in theology. There is no branch of thought where we are more commonly bidden to seek our presuppositions elsewhere than in that thought which is most closely in touch with the relevant experience. You are familiar in the history of science with a similar attempt. You are familiar with the mediaeval period when, on presuppositions independently determined, there was an effort to develop a scientific system; and you are familiar with the disastrous



collapse of that attempt as a result of the modern experimental method. Not merely did it prove invalid, but the presupposition on which it was based proved largely beside the mark. It became clear that, in the field of science at least, valid presuppositions do not emerge save with the knowledge and realization of a wide field of actual experience ; and there is a *prima facie* case, a case which we shall have to endeavour to discuss and to criticize, for the view that the same may be true in theology, if this is comparable.

On the other hand, it is well to emphasize at once that such a view of theology, as I am suggesting, differs considerably from most traditional conceptions. While it may well give a real authority to Catholic thought in virtue of its wide embodiment of experience, that authority is of a different and less simple character than theologians have been inclined to claim.

### LECTURE III.



### LECTURE III.

I HAVE tried to describe briefly those fundamental points in the scientific method with which we shall be concerned in our subsequent discussion. But before we pass on to an attempt to see what are their implications for theology, we have to face the question as to whether the subject-matter of theology is at all comparable with the subject-matter in science. There is one very obvious difference between religious experience and the physical experiences which we seek to systematize in scientific study. If you go into a dark room you will knock your shins against a chair, which happens to be there and in your path, entirely irrespective of your belief as to the existence, presence and nature of that chair. On the other hand, the effect of your prayers, and of your participation in the sacraments, is very largely dependent on your expectations ; more than that, it is not probable that the effect will be considerable if your expectation is merely pragmatic. It is not probable, that is, that you will obtain spiritual benefit apart from some ultimate conception as to the basis of the benefit.

It is possible no doubt to exaggerate this distinction between spiritual and natural experience, in both directions. There is certainly physical experience

which is very largely dependent on particular expectation. A simple illustration of that is familiar to anyone accustomed to use the ophthalmoscope. Still more widely, the importance of the element of selective interest in its bearing on experience, is being made increasingly clear. On the other hand, we are familiar with religious experience of so compelling a sort as to be independent, or largely independent, of antecedent expectation and belief. But when all has been said, by way of mitigating an absolute distinction, the distinction remains a very real one, and a very characteristic one. On that distinction has been based the charge that religious experience is simply the outcome of self-suggestion, and I propose to begin this lecture by endeavouring to indicate grounds for the view that such an explanation is quite inadequate.

We may, of course, reply to those who claim that religious experience is necessarily based on delusion, in the measure in which it is dependent on belief, by pointing out that we are familiar with experience which we hold to be valid and which involves just such elements. It is difficult to undertake any consideration of our own experience in relation to other individuals, more especially of our own experience in relation to our friends, without realizing that much of such experience, while admittedly valid, is nevertheless dependent on our beliefs. Much of our experience in friendship, and in love, does in reality so depend ; and depends not merely on a belief that such experience is possible, but on definite beliefs as to the experience of



others. The argument that religious experience is simply the outcome of self-suggestion is too seriously advanced, and too commonly advanced, to be met simply by such an analogy, even if that analogy were fully worked out, and not merely thus briefly indicated. At the same time the analogy is suggestive.

I have already suggested that religious experience, in general, involves more than an antecedent expectation, that it depends on a belief as to the basis of the experience. Such a fact, if true, is an argument against the self-suggestion theory. It becomes a very strong argument in view of the unexpectedness of grace, in view of the fact that, while the experience is in accordance with underlying belief, it is very often not in accordance with the particular expectations which were in the mind of the individual concerned. It is a phenomenon of the spiritual life, a phenomenon to which many writers have drawn attention, and which few students of that life would hesitate to affirm, that prayer for grace is very commonly not answered in accordance with the expectation of the answer. The grace supplied, or the fruit of the grace sought, is found to be different to that expected, although as effective or more effective. This is a simple, as well as a well-known fact in the spiritual life. It is a fact which cuts right across the view that the experience in question is simply the outcome of expectation. It implies that, while not only expectation but some definite belief as to its basis are a normal condition of spiritual experience, expectation is not the cause of that experience.

A second objection to the self-suggestion theory is of a still broader character. If belief is not merely a condition of spiritual experience, but its source, then we ought to find that any belief which produced expectations of spiritual experience, and was strongly held, should produce that experience. What should matter, on such a view, would be not so much the character of the belief which underlay expectations, but the strength with which these were held. We ought not to find any strong tendency in favour of the selection and survival of particular underlying conceptions. We find not only in Christianity, but in the study of comparative religions, that certain conceptions, for example the conceptions of an Incarnation and Atonement, are continually cropping up in different directions and in different forms. It is very difficult to resist the conclusion that these particular beliefs, just because of their character, work definitely better than other possible beliefs. Nor can that conclusion be discounted by suggesting that the varied existence of these doctrines is due to the survival of a religion held by some stock, from which different nations sprang. Facts compel us, I think, to take the view, either that these examples represent the spontaneous rise in different fields of similar conceptions ; or, at any rate, that they represent more survival than would be secured unless the ideas in question had some special effectiveness. If that view of comparative religion can be maintained, we are bound to say that spiritual experience may be conditioned by belief, but that it is not simply the fruit of expectation. It

seems to me that we are bound to say, that while spiritual experience may not be possible without belief, it is not merely dependent on expectation, but depends on the conformity of underlying beliefs to particular types. In the measure in which the beliefs approximate to those types, in that measure they appear to possess a special effectiveness, which has given them their survival value.

The third immediate objection to the doctrine of self-suggestion, as the basis of religious experience, is of a somewhat different character. If you take any one of the main doctrines of the greater religions, you will find that in general such a doctrine does not merely give rise to experience of one particular type. You will find, for example, that the conception of Atonement does not merely mediate the ordinary spiritual experience of the ordinary man ; it mediates in exceptional cases, or in more exceptional cases, the considerably different experience of conversion ; and it expresses and facilitates certain experiences in the strictly mystical life. If you find that some particular doctrine is effective, as a basis of expectation, not merely in one particular field but, in different but definite ways, in a number of fields, there again there is created a presumption that, while the experience depends on the belief, it is not merely the fruit of expectation : that it results not merely because a particular expectation is held strongly, but because the underlying belief has a special relation to reality. Our attitude and efforts appear to be so oriented by certain beliefs as to make possible experience otherwise unattainable.

Such considerations appear to require the conclusion that religious experience is not merely the outcome of self-suggestion, that in some manner it is objectively determined. If so, the dogmas of religion have a real significance in the measure in which they successfully indicate possible experience. The dependence of actual experience on belief may well imply that the relation between successful theory and reality is necessarily closer in theology than in science. It is sufficient, for my purpose, to insist that, if the possibilities of experience are objectively determined, the successful doctrines of theology have at least the significance of those of science. Since they express experience, indicating its possibility, conditions, and character, they possess an immediate importance; an importance parallel to that of scientific theories, and antecedent to the question as to how far this or that particular doctrine is a valid explanation. If theology has proved able to express and to relate wide and diverse experience, such success can hardly be accidental and implies, further, a real if partial insight. Finally, since this is the case, we have, as we have seen, a possible basis for fundamental assumptions.

It is only, however, if their assumptions do indeed represent real insight, that we legitimately accept either theology, or science, as systems of thought. We are bound to consider, somewhat more carefully, how far the successful embodiment and relation of experience gives to such assumptions a sufficient value. In theology we are faced at the outset by an assumption of a very fundamental character. More

is required than the rejection of self-suggestion as the explanation of religious experience. To take a very crude illustration : it is possible to imagine a materialist who held that the possibilities of such experience were definitely determined, but that they were determined, not by the existence of a God and our relation to Him, but by some peculiarity of the structure of the human brain. There again we could no doubt criticize this particular type of theory. We could point out, for example, the apparent impossibility of finding any physiological basis for the unity of consciousness and the difficulty thus created at the very root of materialistic explanations of our experience. But we are bound to seek deeper foundations than negative argument ; and, if the assumption, which is the basis of theology, is more than the denial of certain particular theories, the first question which arises is how we are to express it.

Mr. Rawlinson has said that the testimony of the Saints was at bottom testimony to the validity of their religious experience. It is not quite clear from Mr. Rawlinson's essay what precisely he meant by "the validity of their religious experience" ; but it is probably not far amiss, if we interpret that phrase to mean that the truth must mediate religious experience as well as explain it. If we completely understood the truth, we should not merely know why this experience was possible and took place ; but we should ourselves seek, and could ourselves have, the experience itself. I should perhaps make clear that I do not think Mr. Rawlinson's statement is on that point adequate. The



experience of the Saints is testimony to something more than this fundamental assumption ; it is testimony to the conditions of experience, once this fundamental assumption is conceded. I do not think Mr. Rawlinson would differ, but he has not explicitly made the distinction which I am now making. Be this as it may ; we have to realize, and to get clear, that the whole of theological thought does depend for its validity on some fundamental assumption of the type of that which Mr. Rawlinson suggests.

The exact nature of the assumption presents a problem of some difficulty. In many cases, when you are dealing with a fundamental assumption, that is so. The number of scientists who would be prepared to explain quite clearly what they mean by the uniformity of nature is not considerable ; or rather, while a fair number might be prepared to do so, those cases would be relatively few in which the explanation would form a really adequate statement, rather than a mere periphrasis. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if the above fundamental assumption (which I have tried to express in the statement that the truth must mediate as well as explain experience) is either a complete statement of what must be assumed in religion, or the actual assumption which tends to emerge from religious experience. Such an assumption implies, indeed, that a materialistic conception of the basis of religious experience is, in all probability, ruled out. It is conceivable that religious experience might be explained, in terms of materialism, by some peculiarities in the human brain : but if that theory was



worked out and was true, then religious experience, while it would be explained, would not be mediated by belief in the explanation. A person holding the theory, which we have supposed true, would be little concerned with religious experience in the sense in which we understand it, and would, in all probability, not be open to it. It is possible that the belief that the truth must mediate as well as explain experience, might be made the basis for a sound development of all the fundamental conceptions of Christian theology. In point of fact, what actually occurs is rather that this view is a conclusion from a wider affirmation. What would actually seem to take place in Christian thought is not that this view is first explicitly affirmed, and then that the existence of God is inferred, as a necessary or highly probable implication of such a view ; but that the existence of God, and our relation to Him, is directly affirmed as the basis of the experience in question. What we are in consequence concerned to consider is how far this affirmation possesses authority.

In the case of science I pointed out to you that we have the existence, and the necessity, of instinctive affirmations ; I took one example in the uniformity of nature. In that case it is highly probable that the assumption in question is not capable of proof. It is certain that it is believed apart from the proof. Even suppose some philosophic argument was to provide a philosophic proof of the assumption which we make in regard to the uniformity of nature, you would still have to explain the fact that this valid assumption has been

reached, and is held, not as the result of philosophic proof, but as the result of a psychological process. You would still be bound to conceive that this psychological process was calculated, under the conditions in which it worked, to reach valid affirmations. There is, no doubt, an obvious distinction between the affirmation of the uniformity of nature and the affirmation of the Being of God. It may be possible to express an affirmation as to the uniformity of nature in terms of our own individual experience, actual or hypothetical. It is certainly not possible to do the same in regard to an affirmation of the Being of God, unless we reduce the latter affirmation to pure pragmatism. If we were content to say that no more is meant by the assertion of God's existence than that our spiritual experience, the effect of our prayers, subjective and otherwise, would all be exactly as if there was a God ; then, but only then, could you equate an assertion of the Being of God to a statement concerning your own experience. If we claim more, and the religious instinct does claim more, then the statement ceases to be merely pragmatic in any ordinary sense of pragmatism.

While there is this distinction between the fundamental assumption of religious thought, and the fundamental assumption of scientific thought, I do not think that the distinction is in any way calculated to invalidate the lessons I wish to draw from science. In the first place, the distinction is probably less absolute than it appears. I doubt whether many scientists would be content to regard the doctrine of the uniformity of

nature as adequately described, if it was held merely to be a statement about our own experience, apart from any inference in regard to the basis of that experience. I think that they would say that the uniformity of nature, as they believe it, asserts not merely an accidental uniformity in experience, but makes an assertion, and makes primarily an assertion, as to a reality behind that experience, an assertion of its orderly character. They believe that the content of their doctrine may be capable of expression in purely pragmatic terms; but their belief in it is, in a considerable degree, philosophical as well as practical.

Whatever may be the case in regard to that point, there is one obvious and all-important case of an assumption normally and indeed universally made, but not believed in because of logical proof, and again, in all probability, incapable of proof. I have in mind, of course, the existence of other people. It is not possible, in all probability, to disprove solipsism; to disprove, that is, the doctrine that the thinker himself is the only conscious being in the universe, and that other people are merely the phantoms of his dreams. Even if such a view was capable of logical disproof, it is certain that its rejection is not based on the knowledge and acceptance of that logic, but on an instinctive affirmation, an affirmation which results from a pronouncement of our sense of fitness as educated in our general experience.

Science teaches us that we do trust, and must trust, affirmations of our sense of fitness. And, even if not science itself, the wide field of thought and experience,

which is concerned with the existence of other people, is testimony that we do trust, and must trust, the psychological process, from which such affirmations issue, not merely for statements which are capable of pragmatic expression, but for statements which extend beyond that type. The value of the case of science is not so much that it illustrates the necessity of unproved assumptions in other fields beside religion, but that it throws light on the conditions in which such assumptions are likely to be valid.

A correct view of such conditions is clearly of supreme importance. The mere sense of personal certainty as to the truth of an assumption is very little evidence of its truth ; for in religion, as in other vital matters, we have different men holding, with an entire sense of certainty, assumptions which are mutually contradictory. In regard to religion, you have men feeling equally positive that there must be a God, and that there cannot be a God. Contradictory instincts are conspicuous also in ethics, and the field might easily be extended. What is required, if we are sometimes to trust the affirmations of the sense of fitness, is some criterion as to when we may safely do so. Now, the lesson of science, the lesson of the revolution which was wrought by the success of the experimental method, lies in the conclusion that the sense of fitness, and its affirmations, are apt to be useless in the measure in which they are not educated by realization of large fields of experience, and in the formation of theories to cover these fields. When, on the contrary, these conditions are fulfilled, then the

sense of fitness is shown, by the progress of science, to be of very great value. This is established by the large function which it has played in the actual development of successful scientific theory. Even so, we cannot claim a finality for the affirmations of such instinctive insight, although we can claim that they have proved that they are likely to have a large measure of validity. It is in consequence necessary, in considering our grounds for our fundamental assumptions, to allow for the significance of error in science—the significance of past errors, or of probable errors, as bearing on the limitations of the sense of fitness.

There is, for example, one theory in science which used to exist, which has been absolutely abandoned, and which has been quoted by Father Tyrrell and others in this connexion. This theory endeavoured to account for the different phenomena of combustion by supposing that, when a body burnt, it gave up a substance with which it had previously been united; that substance was called phlogiston, and gave the name to the theory. Now, the first thing to notice is that this particular theory was rather taken as an expression of particular facts, and accepted because it expressed these facts, or seemed to do so, than because of any fundamental instinct that it must be true. It should be noted also that, when this theory was held, the progress of experimental science had been relatively slight. But what I want to point out is that, even under these unfavourable conditions, this theory has a certain



value ; its most general intellectual reaction was sound. It was an expression of a belief that phenomena could be related and related very widely ; and that analogies, and very wide analogies, existed between them. What was wrong was the acceptance of a chemical, rather than a mechanical, analogy for combustion—the acceptance of the view that what was lost in combustion was a substance and not a form of energy. It is, however, only in respect of the quite fundamental conception (that phenomena could be widely related) that such a theory can be said to have been determined by the sense of fitness, rather than as a rationalization of a particular, and limited, field of experience. In so far as that theory was determined by a very imperfectly educated sense of fitness—by a scientific instinct far less perfectly educated than now—it remains true that the instinct was at bottom sound.

There is another illustration which it is still more worth considering. Until very recently one of the most fundamental assumptions in modern science was the assumption that bodies could not act where they were not, the rejection of any belief in action at a distance. You will find certain physicists who will be disposed to dispute that assumption, who will be disposed to say that it may prove to be true that eventually we shall have to rationalize our experience on lines which admit of action at a distance, and on lines which abandon still more generally our old conceptions of space and action. What I want to point out is that, even if that proved to be a sound view, it does not follow that this instinct which rejected action at a



distance was a false one. It may be true that nature does not act completely in accordance with mechanical analogies which were previously accepted. It is certain that if nature does not always act in that way, if that is not a complete account of its character, it is nevertheless an account which is very widely reliable as a guide to experience. Unless we are prepared to regard as a mere accident the fact that the instinct in question was so fruitful, we must accept the view that it resulted from, and embodied, a real advance in insight. It must reflect an outlook on the physical world which is at bottom sound even if this particular expression of it is ultimately inadequate. Finding, as we do find, that such educated instincts are continually the basis of successful advance, we are bound to reject any conception of accident, and to conclude that they embody real insight. They may not state final truth, but they must constitute a real advance towards it. They must issue from, and must convey, a real if partial comprehension.

On the one hand, then, such instincts—instincts which are the outcome of the sense of fitness as educated by experience—appear to provide a valuable guide to the general character of experience. On the other hand this must imply their embodying real insight. We have no right to suppose that the psychological process, with which we are concerned, reaches such results only in cases where a check is possible. Even in such cases as that of the uniformity of nature, we have the right to presume both that such a conception will be a sound guide to the general

character of experience, and secondly that its assertion embodies, and expresses, a real, even if an imperfect, insight. We have the right both to expect that the sun will rise to-morrow morning, and to feel that such a belief is based on a real, if partial, apprehension of the foundations of our experience.

What is the significance of all this for religious thought? If we turn to the other non-religious affirmation of which I have spoken—the existence of other people—the explanation of its generality would lie in the fact that the experience to which it is relative is so fundamental, so general, and so inevitable that the sense of fitness is inevitably educated, and a right affirmation is generally produced. In religion, as in science, and in religion far less than in science in such an age as this, education, in the relative experience and by attempts to embody this in theory, is very far from inevitable. But if it is present, and if it is guaranteed by exceptional success in embodying and relating wide and diverse experience, we have the right to accept as valid the fundamental affirmations which have issued from that process, and resulted in its success. We shall have to admit that these affirmations are not necessarily final; but we shall have the right to assume that they embody and express a real insight.

## LECTURE IV.



## LECTURE IV.

THE question arises as to whether such a line of argument, as that which we are following, can sufficiently secure the assumptions of theology. We shall have to admit that the axioms we establish provide no final, or exhaustive, account of the reality which underlies our experience. We are bound to ask whether such an admission makes futile any further discussion. If we can claim that such axioms represent and embody a real insight, the necessary qualification is, however, unobjectionable. Consider the affirmation with which we are most concerned—the affirmation of the existence of God. In the best theology, mediaeval as well as patristic or modern, in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas as well as in those of theologians far removed from his point of view, there is no claim whatever that in asserting the existence of God we are making a final, an exhaustive and an adequate statement.

When we say there is a personal God, we merely mean that we affirm a less inadequate account of the totality of experience by asserting that there is a Being who has the experience of being God, or the experience which that phrase suggests to us, than if we deny that statement or fail to make it. We

neither claim that we have an exact knowledge of what the experience of being God would be, nor as to what form any experience would possess for such a Being. We merely state that the least inaccurate view is secured by asserting the existence of experience such as we conceive would be our own experience, were ours the position we assign to God. It is both conceivable, and to be desired, that there may prove possible an advance in understanding. Theology does not claim, and is certainly not concerned to claim, that it has given an exhaustive statement; but only that its assertion, as far as it goes, represents real insight.

We may proceed in consequence to the question as to whether this must be conceded, or rather we must return to the question which we have now seen to be equivalent. Does Catholic theology represent a system of thought closely determined by experience, and exceptionally successful in embodying and relating wide and diverse experience? For the moment we are not concerned with the question as to whether its doctrines are always adequate as philosophy or history. As with science, so with theology, the primary necessities are a free acceptance of experience and successful effort to embody this in theory. If these are secured, we may not have a system which is either final or exhaustively accurate, but we have seen reason to conclude, not only that it will be a sound guide to the general character of the relevant experience, but that its general outlook and characteristic assumptions will embody a real, if partial,



apprehension of the underlying reality. What we have to establish, as a foundation, is simply that Catholic doctrine corresponds closely to religious experience, and that it is exceptionally successful in co-ordinating that experience.

Once it is clear that there lies the fundamental issue, it is difficult to deny the claims of Catholic thought. Those who attack Catholicism are very frequently witnesses to its significance. We are told that Catholic theology has embodied both Jewish Apocalyptic and many of the ideas of Hellenistic religion. Such appears to be the case ; but both sets of conceptions owed their success to corresponding experience, and their embodiment implied the synthetic power of the new religion. Such historical conclusions strengthen the case for Catholic dogma by extending its basis of experience. We are told that Catholic theology has been developed, not by "legitimate reasoning" but in accordance with devotional values. Such a view concedes, in short, that Catholic doctrine has been developed, in accordance with its power to express and to mediate spiritual experience. We cannot dismiss that experience because the explanation seems unsatisfactory. Even if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we are more likely to lose than to gain, if we abandon the doctrine entirely, rather than retain it as expressing experience, while we admit that it is not an adequate conception.

In proportion as the experience in question is extensive, such a course becomes the more necessary ; and we have to remember, both the wide extent of

Catholic Christianity, and the fact that it appears peculiarly successful, not merely in embodying the experience of the most religious, but in indicating the possibilities of religious experience for the ordinary man and the ordinary sinner. I wish to emphasize the equal importance of this last consideration. There is a certain tendency to resort to eclectic religion, to turn for your system to the conceptions of the few and the most advanced. If the claim is merely that we should give special attention to the conceptions of the few who are most advanced, it obviously possesses a large validity. If, as is too commonly the case, there has been the attempt to reject or to ignore the lines on which religious experience is best secured in the case of the ordinary man or the sinner, then that point of view is utterly unscientific, and is pre-eminently calculated to reach false or partial conclusions.

On the other hand the Catholic system proves also a peculiarly reliable guide to more advanced forms of the spiritual life. If we confine ourselves for the moment to characteristically Christian experience, it is very difficult to deny that within the Catholic tradition that is produced in a pre-eminent manner. The test in this respect must not be whether a large number of those who profess themselves within some particular tradition possess a high degree of spiritual experience : but whether within that tradition we do find, in an exceptional number of cases, that a high degree of spiritual experience is produced, and that the subjects ascribe this to the practice of certain

principles. Tried by that test, it is very difficult to deny that the Catholic tradition has an altogether exceptional value.

If we turn from strictly spiritual experience to the moral effect of such experience it is again difficult to make this denial. That argument is, however, peculiarly apt to be put in a circular manner. It is easy to take your ideal of morality from Catholicism, and then to approve Catholicism, because it produces this ideal. Regarded as an *argumentum ad hominem*, the argument can be very simply re-stated so as to avoid this circle. If it is conceded that your conception of morality is to be taken from the New Testament, then we are bound to admit that the great Catholic Saints most closely approximate to that morality ; that with them it is found in a more many-sided manner than elsewhere. But quite apart from such an argument *ad hominem*, there is an argument which is legitimate. The Catholic moral ideal is an ideal which is peculiarly remote from the unregenerate instincts of the ordinary man ; and in consequence a somewhat exceptional power to reach this somewhat exceptional ideal is a matter of considerable significance.

On the other hand the field of morals provides, also, a common, and at first sight serious, objection to Catholic conceptions. We are reminded of the abuses of ecclesiasticism : the pride, immobility, and unscrupulousness, which history recounts. The difficulty is, however, somewhat superficial. It is obvious that a Catholic ministry must have exceptional

temptations in such directions. That these so result, is evidence, of course, that the clergy are as other men ; that they have a different, and very difficult task, but similar frailties ; and that in certain directions there is much need for practical reforms. A substantial issue would arise if the Catholic system placed men in positions which were not only difficult but impossible. In that case it would stand condemned : but in point of fact saintly ecclesiastics are not uncommon. In consequence, what we have to ask is simply whether piety and devotion are not best produced in the Church *as a whole*, at the expense of placing certain men in positions which are very difficult to fill well, but which are essential to the system in question. It seems difficult to refuse, with fairness, an affirmative answer.

Such considerations as I have summarized in this and the second lecture, suggest not merely that Catholic theology is a reliable guide to the main fields of religious experience, but that it is peculiarly reliable as a guide, and has a scope which is exceptionally general. Even if that be the case, it is clearly necessary to deal with the problem which Protestant traditions of thought, and Protestant experience, present. In the first place it is well to notice that these are frequently a re-action from the intellectual expression, or justification, of certain practices or beliefs. That is an inevitable, and at times a highly desirable tendency. There is a good illustration of a corresponding tendency in the science of the last century. There was a point where science brushed aside

and rejected many of the phenomena with which psychical research is now concerned. It brushed aside and rejected these phenomena because they seemed to be inconsistent with any tolerable conception of nature. Such a re-action, such a tendency, may be, and sometimes is, desirable as a phase ; but in general the end must be to get back to an acceptance of experience, and to reach an explanation of this, on some basis not open to the old objection.

In the second place, we are bound to admit that the positive values of Protestantism are very generally present in the best Catholicism. Let me take, as an illustration of that, quite an extreme example—the Quaker conceptions. You have had these inside the Catholic system, in an extreme degree in Quietism, and, in a less individualistic form, continually and in varied types. The difference between the Quaker tradition and the reflection of it within Catholicism lies not so much in the possession, or absence, of any particular experience, but in the attitude adopted to the experience of others. What is wrong, and what Catholic thought legitimately claims to be wrong, with the Quaker tradition is not its assertion of the reality of its own experience, not even its assertion that some men are called to seek God through that particular experience rather than through others, but its denial of the value of other forms of experience, of their legitimacy, and of their normality.

There is a further, and even more general, consideration, one which is suggested and implied in what has just been said. If we are to recognize, as almost any



Christian thinker would now admit, that there is a large amount of truth in all these Christian views, that there is a great deal of value in all these Christian practices, we do well to remember that we are simply paying lip-worship to that fact, if we leave it there. The proper corollary to that view is, not that we should be indifferent as to which of those traditions we support ; or, as is even more common, that we should feel ourselves capable of dispensing with all these traditions ; but that we must seek for some system of thought which will provide a synthesis of these different partial views. I have already indicated that it seems to me that the best Catholic thought in a very large degree does do so ; but I am content to claim, not that it does so effectively in all cases, but that it is far more synthetic than any other extant tradition of Christian thought. If that be the case, and if, as seems increasingly clear, no individual can wisely seek to build up a Christian system of thought *de novo*, but best serves truth by seeking to advance the best school of thought, then that is in itself a sufficient argument for the superiority of the Catholic tradition.

It is obvious that far larger problems are raised by the existence and nature of other religions ; but there again the same arguments apply. As has been already said, the Catholic tradition embodies and synthesizes, in a very remarkable degree, conceptions which had proved to be of spiritual value in other religions. The detailed examination of such a conclusion, in a very general field, still constitutes an



important task for Christian study. It is more than probable that exaggerations will be found in the parallels heaped together when these were regarded as an argument against Christianity. It is, however, already clear that sufficient parallels exist to supply evidence that Catholic theology embodies the main lines of religious experience, non-Christian as well as Christian. On the other hand, it seems scarcely less certain that the Christian doctrines are, in general, more coherent, balanced, and effective than those to which they are parallel. The admission appears already inevitable, not indeed that Catholic theology supplies a perfect synthesis of religious experience, but that it does supply the best extant synthesis, and does cover the main lines of experience.

There is a further consideration to which it is well to return. Doctrines evolved primarily in relation to one field of religious experience have proved effective in other, and different, fields. I pointed out in my second lecture the existence of a similar phenomenon in science, and the significance of this, as showing that our theories had got beyond the exceptional relation of some particular field to views which were wider, presumably because they possessed a deeper insight. The same characteristics, if they exist in theological thought, imply the same conclusion. Now, in regard to the larger Christian and Catholic doctrines, for example, the doctrines of the supernatural Christ, of Atonement and Redemption, we must, I think, admit that they do cover not merely wide, but diverse fields of experience. There is first

of all the normal experience of the ordinary man, the power of these doctrines to mediate religious experience to the ordinary man. There is again the power of the same doctrines to mediate those peculiar and exceptional experiences which we call conversion, and which are mediated in a special degree by just those doctrines I have named. There is again the fact that these doctrines were not thrashed out primarily as the result of either of the two experiences to which I have referred, at least not in quite their present form. They were thrashed out because of their correspondence to, and value for, the experience of those first Christians, whose experience, like the experience at the beginning of any great religious movement, was in a special degree catastrophic, and in some degree *sui generis*. I believe that as one thinks over those different fields, one comes to realize, not merely their common element, but a very large measure of diversity.

If you turn to morality, you again add another field of experience in which these particular doctrines are remarkably effective, and a field which again shows somewhat different forms. Nor is this all. The outcome of these doctrines led to the Trinitarian formula; and one of the most remarkable features of religious experience is that in what is known as the strictly mystical experience—the experience of the stricter mystics—there is an alternation between different conceptions of the Godhead, and an alternation which closely corresponds to the Trinitarian doctrine. There is no field of religious

experience, where the experience so closely corresponds to type, and appears to be so determinate, as in this stricter mystical experience ; and it is a fact of considerable significance that this theological doctrine, evolved in a large degree on different grounds, has proved really illuminating within that field.

I have tried to summarize some of the grounds for regarding the Catholic tradition of thought as having been evolved in close dependence on religious experience ; as expressing, with marked and exceptional success, the possibilities of religious experience ; as embodying a very wide range of such experience, and presenting by far the best available synthesis ; as issuing in conceptions which have proved able to cover different fields of experience. Before I pass on to a more careful statement of the conclusions which are implied by such characteristics, I want to dwell for a few minutes on another aspect of the problem, as it affects the fundamental conceptions of Christian thought.

I have spoken very much as though that thought was simply concerned with religious experience. That is not so. The Being of God, for example, must be regarded not merely as an explanation of religious experience, but in relation also to other experience. I do not propose to discuss the arguments for Theism, but I do wish to suggest a particular attitude to these. Even if the main ground of our belief in the existence of God is our religious experience, and our instinct educated in that experience, the so-called proofs of Theism have a real significance ; not as independent proofs each compelling, but as partial verifications

in a wider field. So fundamental a conception as Theism should be of general value, and it is such general value which, it seems to me, these so-called proofs attest. Just because we do not claim that our idea is philosophically complete, we need not expect that its general application should present no difficulty. That is true in regard to more or less fundamental conceptions in many directions, conceptions which we yet hold, and rightly hold, while remembering their partial character. What we may, I think, claim is, first the considerable value of Theism in philosophy, and secondly that the best possibility of meeting difficulties in its application lies in Christian Theism. It is this sort of partial verification which is that we ought to find with a system, which does not claim to be a complete metaphysic, but merely the expression of a growing insight into ultimate reality.

I have said that I am not going to discuss the particular arguments for Theism, but I wish to refer briefly to one which is closely germane to much of the line of argument which we have followed. The assumption of Theism does explain what is otherwise really difficult to explain, the whole process by which our sense of fitness becomes able to reach underlying truths, or partial truths. If the ultimate basis of all reality, and all experience, is personal, then it becomes possible to see how we are able to generalize from a limited field of phenomena to more or less fundamental conceptions. On the other hand, unless there is some such similarity between ourselves and the ultimate reality, which is

the ground of experience, it is very difficult to see how or why such a process is possible.

If in the case of the fundamental conception of the Being of God, we find that it possesses a very real value in fields outside religious experience strictly conceived, we find this also in various directions in regard to some of its more immediate implications. Let me illustrate that by one rather curious example. The doctrine of creation is a fundamental part of Christian Theism. That doctrine may, or may not, provide an outlook which is ultimately satisfactory. It may, or may not, require some considerable re-statement. But what I wish to point out to you is that the conception it gives of nature, as a system which is running down, is a conception which has found a good deal of support within science itself. This conception of a system, which is running down, is a conception which is open to grave objections ; it may require drastic re-statement ; but it is a conception which has not merely issued from religious thought, but has been adopted independently by science to meet a real need in scientific thought. However great the change which may take place in such a conception, it is difficult not to conclude that it must at least be the symbol of some ultimate truth.





## LECTURE V.



## LECTURE V.

LET me try to summarize the course of our main argument, to sum up the position we have reached, and to indicate certain important considerations with which I have not so far dealt explicitly. The ultimate significance of Catholic dogmas lies in the fact that any alternative synthesis must explain the experience which these dogmas embody. The same is true *mutatis mutandis* of the doctrines of science, to which Father Tyrrell turned for a parallel. We saw, however, in the case of science, that its system possesses a further authority. Its successful theories fit into a general point of view ; a number of those theories have proved capable of expressing and relating more than one set of phenomena ; and this suggests that these theories represent a real insight, even if a partial insight, into the underlying reality. Such a conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the educated scientific instinct has largely assisted in the formulation of successful theories. We have seen, in the case of science, that the results of this instinct are such as to justify reliance upon it in respect of its unverifiable assumptions, to the extent of regarding these as a sound guide to the general character of experience, and as embodying and conveying a real, even if an incomplete, insight. It may be

noted that our argument implied that the more fundamental a particular instinct, and the more it is an essential assumption in a large range of successful theory, the more reliable it is likely to prove, even although it is never likely to be a complete and exhaustive apprehension of final truth. As a result of all this, our belief in science is something more than a belief in the experience which its theories relate and summarize. We accept as our best available outlook its general system, and we trust its fundamental assumptions.

We have seen that there is sound reason for the belief that religious experience is not merely self-suggested but is objectively determined. We have seen that Catholic doctrine is marked by a close relation to experience; and that it embodies and relates wide and diverse fields of experience. As a result, we are justified in adopting Father Tyrrell's dictum; but we are bound also to go further, and to admit such further conclusions, as I have just recapitulated in regard to science. We are justified in the first place in accepting the fundamental axiom of religion in its most general form, and in assuming the "validity" of religious experience. We can enlarge accordingly the assertion that the fundamental significance of Catholic doctrine lies in the experience which it embodies. It is implied that any alternative synthesis must not only explain, but must mediate such experience. That constitutes the immediate authority of dogma. We are bound also to concede a further (although dependent) authority, still parallel to that involved in the case of science. We have a system of thought, which has successfully related wide

and diverse experience, and has largely done so by successful reliance on instinct educated in that field. We have reason therefore for a general belief in Catholic theology as a system of thought, and for reliance on its characteristic assumptions, a reliance which is increasingly legitimate in proportion as these are fundamental.

Those are conclusions which I cannot see how to avoid. There are obvious objections over and above those I have explicitly considered ; but I believe that they are really met by what I have said. It is obvious, for example, that theological thought and instinct have made serious mistakes both in science and history, and in their conception of their reliability in such directions. That type of mistake is familiar in other directions, not excluding science. You have the inclination to treat partial conclusions as final, and to rule out experience or thought which interferes with your synthesis. The dogmatic rejection of certain psychical phenomena, and the crude and dogmatic materialism of much nineteenth century science, provide an illustration. Such faults do not affect the *fundamental* validity of scientific thought. That is established by its proved value, and determined by its method. An exaggerated dogmatism is no more significant in theology than when it appears in science or elsewhere. It is harmful, and will require correction. It provides, however, no escape from a general conclusion that Catholic theology is the best guide to religious experience and the least inadequate account of the reality behind that experience. Since the

most fundamental affirmation of that theology is that religious experience depends on a direct relation with a personal God, it follows that theology will represent our best picture of *ultimate* reality. This will be none the less the case because the account does not deal perfectly with the problems of religious experience; or because it is sometimes incoherent, or wrong, in particulars; or because it does not always deal successfully with less central experience or with the explanation of this.

In this connexion I may be allowed to say something, in parenthesis, in defence of the dangerous but unduly abused doctrine of "water-tight compartments" in regard to our beliefs. There is no view which is more commonly, or more indignantly, assailed than the theory that a man has a right to separate his religious beliefs from his beliefs in other directions—to hold, let us say, in science and religion views which are apparently contradictory. If that contradiction is accepted finally, if a man regards it as more than a temporary necessity, which it must be the object of thought to overcome, no doubt the position is wholly impossible. On the other hand, if it is recognized that in both directions the accepted beliefs contain a symbolic element, then such an attitude may be both justified and required as a temporary expedient. The ground of this necessity, the symbolic element in the truths in both fields, is ground however for the assertion that when any strong contradiction takes place, the ultimate solution is likely to lie, not in one view or the other triumphing, but in some synthesis. To



take an obvious example, any final account of our physical universe must satisfy both the theological and the scientific instinct. Until this is secured, it is more than conceivable that in any given case science might have to work with and adopt one conception, and theology another. Each conception is likely to be a reliable guide to the experience with which it is primarily concerned ; but may be quite inadequate in regard to the experience which concerns the other. Each conception will express a real, if partial, insight. So much must be recognized, even although a synthesis must be steadily pursued. We come back to the conception that the authority of theology is confined to faith and morals, but to that conception in a somewhat different and more reliable form.

The general view of theology, which I have tried to put before you, involves an acceptance of Father Tyrrell's position ; but it goes beyond that position, at least as explicitly stated in his works. It treats the immediate and fundamental authority of dogmas as the authority of the experience which these serve to summarize ; but it admits to theology a further, although dependent, significance. On the other hand, while it thus asserts the validity of Catholicism as a system of thought, there is also involved a very considerable modification of widely current conceptions of theology. There is implied that the finality of doctrines may easily be exaggerated ; and while various points have been dealt with which suggest this criticism, both these, and others, require more explicit treatment.

In the first place our confidence is in a system of thought as a whole, and in the method on which it is based. Let me illustrate what I mean, once more by the case of science. One's fundamental belief is that the scientific system, taken as a whole, represents the least misleading view which has yet been achieved in these matters ; and that the method, on which it is based, represents the best method for building up sound views. We have to remember that the confidence in any particular theory is something less than the confidence in the whole. The belief that, taken as a whole, the system is the best way of looking at things, is a conviction in no way incompatible with the view, not only that this or that particular is neither final nor incapable of improvement, but that it is not necessarily incapable of very radical change. If we are to find grounds for accepting the authority of theological thought by analogy with those grounds which justify the authority of scientific thought, then we must say that our allegiance is fundamentally to Catholic thought as an organic whole, rather than to a series of particular propositions. Our position must, in short, be expressed in the opening phrase of the Athanasian Creed. I do not suggest for a moment that the writer of that creed had in mind the distinction which I am now making, but it does very aptly express that distinction. It asserts not a belief in a whole series of propositions, but a belief in the Catholic Faith, and a statement of the particulars of which that faith consists.

If consistency of belief requires our acceptance of

Catholic thought primarily as an organic system, we have also to recognize that it implies the absence of finality in that thought, even as a whole. We have to recognize that it does not represent an absolute philosophic system ; and we must make that recognition not merely in regard to particulars, but in regard to the system taken as a whole. On the other hand, once it is recognized that we are not dealing with an absolute philosophic system, but with truth which is in some degree at least symbolic, such a statement does not mean that your system of thought is ever likely to be upset. Whatever happens, you must have both a continued recognition of the experience embodied in that system, and a continued confirmation of the real, if partial, value of its outlook, combined of course with progress in this outlook.

There is a further point of great practical importance. If theological thought is to possess any high degree of authority, not only must such thought be closely related to experience, but the consensus of opinion must be a free consensus. If you put, by means of ecclesiastical authority, a high premium on some particular opinion, then the evidential value of a consensus of thought in favour of that opinion is greatly weakened. In enforcing particular opinions by ecclesiastical discipline, you destroy the rational authority for that particular opinion which you are seeking to foster. I do not wish to suggest that no ecclesiastical pressure is desirable in these matters. It is obviously legitimate when the temper of thought is presumptuous ; although, on such a point, the individual is entitled to

the benefit of any doubt. It may well be used when accredited teachers fail to make clear when they differ from a wide consensus, or express opinions, not yet generally accepted, as though they were certain. It is however another matter when it is employed, not to secure a reasonable temper, but to enforce particular conclusions, however important. Such a use of ecclesiastical discipline is not merely something which might not command our assent; but as to which we might be comparatively indifferent, if we agreed with the doctrine in question. The measure of our belief in the doctrine in question must be the measure of our objection to a process which cuts at the root of rational authority for that doctrine. Yet again, if a tradition of thought is to be sound it must be free, or relatively free, from great immobility; and, in the measure in which immobility, and unreflecting immobility, becomes characteristic of a theological tradition of thought, in that measure there is weakened the rational authority for its particular conclusions. It follows that this is the case unless there is acceptance, and fairly wide acceptance, at least of the academic possibility of considerable reconstruction of thought, and especially of reconstruction of particular doctrines.

One implication of what I have been saying will be obvious to you. It represents to my mind strong ground indeed for the gravest objection to the whole of the Roman system. In the case of the Roman Church we have, of course, that close relation of thought to experience, which we have seen to be so highly important. On the other hand, the Roman

Church regards its dogmas as the irreformable pronouncements of an oracular authority. If the line of thought I have followed is at all correct a system is necessarily inadequate in which reconsideration is so essentially gratuitous. It is not adapted to facilitate the reconstruction of belief, where this is necessary, or to maintain *rational* authority for the retention of doctrines when these are questioned. The situation is the more disastrous because the Roman theory has found expression, quite logically, in the attempt to secure a consensus by disciplinary methods ; and this for the time being in an increasing degree. I remember reading a French work of apologetics which began with the sentence : "*L'unité doctrinale est le miracle permanent de l'Eglise*". That I think is true, in the sense that nothing is more remarkable than the tendency of theology in touch with Catholic experience to revert to type. But it is also true that, if machinery is provided for working that "miracle," it loses its whole significance. In the measure in which you secure that unity by disciplinary action, in that measure you deprive that unity of its great authority.

Another and grave objection directly arises from immobility of thought. I would venture to suggest now, what I wish to develop later, in regard to particular doctrines, that, while Roman theology was sound in its wide recognition of religious experience and in the instinct which led it to seek to bring all such experience within its theory, it adopted inadequate conceptions. It has claimed that these are final. I



have spoken of a tendency in the nineteenth century science, which insisted that phenomena were to be brushed aside, if they did not fit in with a satisfactory theory, a theory which could really be commended as a whole. I think we may claim that, just as it has eventually proved that many psychical phenomena cannot thus be ignored, and that our theories must be extended to cover these phenomena, so a similar development must take place in regard to Reformation Theology. There also too much experience was set aside. But it is not possible to deny that the Reformation theology represented a real, a legitimate, and a necessary conclusion that the pre-existing synthesis was far from satisfactory.

There is a final point in regard to any sound tradition of theological thought, to which it is well to draw attention. It is the special importance of the initial period of Christianity. Whatever view we take of the underlying facts of that period (and that is a question which we shall presently have to discuss at some length), it is characteristic of the start of any great religious movement that the experience of those who initiate it is catastrophic and in some degree unique. If that is so, then any theory must be checked in large measure by its power to deal with that particular and special field. It is not legitimate to regard the New Testament merely as the first chapter of Christian theology; or to deny that the experience, with which it deals, must be in a special sense normative for thought. There again it seems to me there is ground for somewhat serious criticism



of the method of Roman theology, especially where it relies on the "Development of Doctrine".

It is proper that I should make a brief effort to suggest how such conceptions affect the position of the Anglican, as well as the Roman, Church. While we are bound to say that the Anglican position is open to grave dangers, especially to that of opportunism; and that a point has now been reached at which a real crisis exists; yet that position provides a very special opportunity for sound construction. In the first place, it is obvious that the point to which I have just referred, the normativeness of the experience which the New Testament expresses, and the resulting authority of Scripture, is a point which has been specially insisted on in the Anglican Church. It is true that this insistence took an old-fashioned form; that it amounted, or nearly amounted, to a conception of verbal inspiration which it is impossible now to maintain; yet it was reaching after something which is essential. Again, within the Anglican Communion there is no attempt, or no great attempt, to assert any infallibility of formulas which is calculated to interfere with a free consensus; and yet that is combined with the definite assertion of doctrines. You do not merely have a statement that you are free to think as you like: you have a definite statement of the tradition of thought, combined with the freedom to consider, and to reconsider, that tradition. Finally, while it is obvious that what I have said has implied that the Anglican Church has been mistaken in endeavouring to rule

out certain practices and conceptions, because at a particular period it was impossible to fit these in with what seemed a satisfactory theology ; yet it does not seem to involve any disloyalty whatever to that Church to assume that, in a great and necessary *bouleversement* of thought, in certain directions it made mistakes, and in certain directions it went too far. It would be claiming a very high degree of infallibility for a Church to claim that, when it was taking part in a reaction, however necessary, it was not likely to go too far. It is anomalous, to say the least, that those who most dislike such criticism of the Reformation Settlement, are those who are most disposed to object to a claim of Ecclesiastical infallibility. The *most* that loyalty might require, is that Anglican Catholics should believe that the Reformation Settlement in the Church of England was in its day a sound view, based on some sound principle ; that had they lived in that day, and thought in the terms of that day, they would have wished to have been upon that side.

On the other hand, there is grave reason to emphasize the parallel to the progress of nineteenth century science. When the need for considerable reconstruction of thought arises, when it is necessary to make substantial changes in an underlying system of thought and point of view, then it is not unnatural, and it may be inevitable, that certain experiences should for a time be brushed aside and contradicted. It is not unhealthy that this should take place ; but the position is open to very serious objection, if there is a persist-

ent refusal to reconsider on newer lines the experience in question, and to embody it as far as possible. Such an attempt is a duty which is imposed by intellectual honesty, but it is also dictated by the gravest practical considerations. It is necessary that the Anglican Church should get away from an opportunism, which aims simply at holding people together, rather than at reaching sound conclusions. It is increasingly open to doubt whether such an opportunism is likely to be successful, even in securing the end which it seeks to obtain. In any case the continued acceptance of so limited a policy is calculated to prove disastrous. It conveys an impression to the ordinary man that the tradition of thought, with which he is faced, is intellectually rotten. It suggests that that tradition is either sterile, or is not primarily interested in reaching truth; and, as that comes to be felt, it is inevitable, and it has occurred in no small degree, that men distrust the whole system, even in its most fundamental points. Such a consideration is of special importance at present: those in authority in the Anglican Church are feeling, and in all probability are rightly feeling, that questions in theology of a fundamental character must be treated as in some degree open. Such action, as I have tried to indicate, is characteristic of a sound tradition of thought rather than the reverse. It is not characteristic of a sound tradition of thought if, while some questions are being opened, others are not being closed. If you have not merely advance in certain directions, combined with new uncertainty in others, but a

gradual extension of uncertainty throughout the whole field, then a tradition of thought of this description is not calculated to command confidence, and does not deserve confidence.

And if the effect on the ordinary man, who has to deal with the Church of England, is calculated to be disastrous should a policy of opportunism be indefinitely pursued, the same is no less true of the contribution which it is in the power of the Church of England to make to Christianity as a whole. If there is anything in the whole position which I have tried to indicate, if what is required is a Catholicism but a liberal Catholicism, then the Church of England has unique opportunity for providing an embodiment of that, and an embodiment of that in an historic Church, and a Church which draws importance from national importance. On the one hand, if the Church of England is content to identify itself either with Protestantism or Ultra-montanism, the possibility for this specific contribution passes away. Such a result must, however, also ensue, if an opportunist policy is pursued indefinitely, which seeks to include almost all conceivable opinions within the Church of England. What is to be desired is, not merely that there should be toleration of this or that particular school, but that the Church as a whole should provide an example, and an embodiment, of what liberal Catholicism can mean.

In the face of the fact that some danger exists that unity may be sought by approximating to Protestantism, it is well to remember that such a course, in present

circumstances, would enforce a choice for many between a denial of the reality of much experience and an acceptance of an obscurantist synthesis. If there is anything in the position for which I am contending, the forcing of such a choice will be disastrous for individuals, and for individual thought; and it will spell failure to use a great opportunity for a corporate tradition, on sound and much needed lines. May I remind you of a further practical consideration? We are faced at present with a riotous and dangerous parochialism among those in our Church who do accept such experience. It is vitally important that this should become more disciplined. On the other hand any effectual regulation can only come with a frank acceptance of underlying principles, even if that acceptance is necessarily critical. Otherwise a choice is forced, not only between a denial of Catholic experience and support of obscurantism, but between such a denial and a somewhat lawless individualism. In each case you drive men, who see grave faults and dangers, to accept these, as lesser evils, rather than to aid in avoiding them.

We have no right to deny, or to forget, that those placed in authority have got to consider expediency; but we have the right to ask that, while they should consider expediency as regards their method, they should have in view an end. We have a right to urge, if the policy of the Anglican Church is to be sound, that the determining factor in regard to doctrinal policy must be an attempt to reach truth and synthesis, and to secure acceptance for these, rather than to rest indefinitely on compromise and compre-



hension. If there is anything in the general argument that these lectures advance, this must involve a definite movement towards a liberal Catholicism.

It may seem I have been guilty of some inconsistency, that, having urged the importance of freedom of thought, I have now argued in favour of action by those in authority. Before I conclude this lecture, I should like to deal briefly with such a criticism. What I am concerned to argue is not that certain views could be properly enforced in the Anglican Church, but that they should be more fully adopted, and more frankly countenanced, by those in authority. I have urged that such a course should be adopted as against the support of any alternative position. That is of course simply a question of the validity of my main argument. There is a further question as to whether those in authority should influence opinion, by official endorsement in advance of general agreement. Such a course is inevitably limited by the considerable necessity for common action, and should obviously be cautiously applied. It does, however, seem to be intrinsically desirable. Endorsement by the leaders of the Church brings with it the substantial support of a large amount of moderate opinion and provides the only effective check on the undue influence of uninstructed prejudice and uninstructed conservatism. On the other hand unless such endorsement is held infallible, or is extended to persecution, it does not greatly check serious and careful thought, even where this tends to reach different conclusions. Such thought can look forward to converting, in its turn, those in authority.



## LECTURE VI.



## LECTURE VI.

I HAVE tried to indicate a general view of theology and to urge arguments in favour of that view. What I now propose to try to do is to work out the implications in various directions of the general, but critical, acceptance of traditional theology : partly because in that way such a view will stand out far more clearly, and partly because I wish to relate it directly to current problems. I propose in the remaining lectures to deal first with the supreme problem of Christology ; secondly with certain illustrative controversies about one or two Catholic doctrines ; and finally with the doctrine of the Church.

We have certain literary relics of the first age of our religion ; and, as I have already said, the first age of any religion is of peculiar importance. The initial history of every great spiritual movement, or spiritual revival, is the history of a special and in some degree a catastrophic experience. In the case of Christianity there are exceptional reasons for such a view. The marked and rapid crystallization of a Christian theology, and the character and wide value of that theology, attest a period of very remarkable religious experience. The importance for any sound theology of the relics of such an age suggests an interesting, and to some extent an illuminating,

parallel to one of the sciences. So far for purposes of illustration I have been mainly drawing from the field of Physics ; but I wish to remind you that we have a more comparable field in Geology. There the determination of our main theories must be very largely based on relics of a remote past, and on the interpretation of those relics. But there, and, as I would urge too in theology, this interpretation must be based on the acceptance and investigation of current experience, and in reliance on a sense of fitness educated not only by the examination of the relics themselves, but by a close acquaintance with such current experience.

There have been three main attempts to account for the relics of the first Christian age, which we have in the New Testament. The first attempt is that of Liberal Theology which rejects the conception of a supernatural Christ, but bids us return to Jesus the Prophet. Such a theology involves a fundamental rejection of the facts of experience. If there is anything in the whole point of view which I have been putting, it is that the most authoritative content of Christian theology lies in the fact that it embodies and expresses religious experience. It is difficult to deny that this is most the case with just those conceptions of an Incarnation and an Atonement, which hinge round the idea of a supernatural Christ. It is just those conceptions which Christians have found to be most closely related to their religious experience ; and it is therefore the significance of just those conceptions which is attested by that experience.

Supposing it could be shown that the doctrine of a supernatural Christ was untrue, the conclusion must be, not that we should brush aside the traditional dogmas as of no significance, and that we should get back to the teaching of Jesus the Prophet, but that Catholic theology is much less interested in the historic person of Jesus than it previously supposed. The value of its doctrines would not vanish with the discovery that they were myth. They must at least be myth which is highly significant. Let me illustrate what that might mean by a somewhat crude example : suppose I tell you that somebody gives his coat to any beggar he meets in the street, and suppose you subsequently discover that the man in question has been convinced by the Charity Organization Society of the impropriety of such behaviour, it might well still be the case that my statement would have conveyed real information about his character. The point is that his character is such as to suggest that he would give his coat to a beggar in the street ; but that there are certain other and obscure reasons why in point of fact he does not do so. Apply that parable to the conceptions of an Incarnation and an Atonement, and to the belief that, if an Incarnation took place, it would be in such a figure as is presented in the Holy Scriptures : these conceptions might give real information about the nature and character of God, even although there were certain obscure reasons why, in point of fact, such an Incarnation would not take place. The point I am concerned to emphasize is that the authoritative element in the Christian

religion is precisely the value of these conceptions for religious experience. Even if we could not regard such conceptions as historical, we would still have to give them some such other and highly significant position. A theology, which simply brushes such conceptions aside, is unscientific and without authority ; content to ignore very central experience, it is ill calculated to be a guide to experience, and ill adapted to the search for truth.

Such an objection is of a quite general and conclusive character ; but there appears to be a further difficulty in this particular type of theology. The whole tendency to recognize the eschatological element in our Lord's teaching has added to, and emphasised, the evidence for the view, not that we had some Eastern prophet who so conceived of himself, and was deified by his disciples, but rather that our Lord regarded Himself as a supernatural figure. If that is so, then this Liberal Theology is in the anomalous position of claiming, on the one hand, that our Lord's teaching is to be regarded as authoritative from its high degree of inspiration, and, on the other, that such teaching is merely delusion, when it is concerned with what appears to have been an integral part of His message.

You will understand that what I have been arguing is not necessarily that we must accept the conception of a supernatural Christ ; but that, even if this conception were untrue, we cannot get away from its proved value as a guide to religious experience. We have still to consider an alternative conception which



I have already indicated and which regards the Catholic doctrine as bad history but as a great advance in our conception of God and of our relation to Him. Such a view is characteristic of the Modernist movement, and represents the second great type among attempts to explain the origin and nature of our religion.

Modernism accepted many of the historical conclusions of Liberal Protestant thought and denied the traditional conception of our Lord's person. At most it admits a marked, and supremely significant, advance in the existing order. In its extreme form such a view asserts that you had at the period when the Christian era began, and immediately before that period, great movements of religious ideas and a great and sudden crystallization of those ideas. If yet again I might take an illustration from science, such a view might compare what took place to a supersaturated solution which suddenly crystallizes. It is possible, and it has been held, that the actual figure, the actual person, round whom these ideas crystallized, was little more than accidental. Such a theory is open to the gravest objections. It is very difficult to believe, not only that such rapid crystallization of myth took place in that way, but that it did so in what is pretty obviously a form greatly improved, and of vastly better moral content. It is very difficult to conceive that such a process took place, unless the centre of crystallization contributed in some high degree to the crystallization. It is very difficult to believe that our Lord was not largely responsible for the ideas with which we are concerned.

Such a movement of opinion leads, however, to another and improved form of Modernism. It would be admitted that our Lord conceived Himself as the Messiah,—and rightly so, for He realized the supreme nature of the religious opportunity, and His power to meet this opportunity; and He was justified by the success of Christianity. Such a view can even go farther, by adopting the conception of a diffused incarnation. It can accept the whole Christian doctrine of the body and members of Christ, and can regard the historic Jesus as the head in that body; but it would urge that, just as in natural physiology we had to alter our views, and regard the life as dwelling in the body as a whole rather than as drawn from the head, so we must make a similar change of view in regard to our conceptions of the mystical body. It would be urged that, although Jesus of Nazareth was the head of the body, the life of the body dwelt in the body as a whole, and simply in Him as its supreme and most important member; that it was not drawn from Him or through Him.

However necessary it is to hesitate in accepting conceptions of this type, we do well to recognize how much they cover. It is open, to those who adopt such conceptions, to claim that they differ from Catholic thought, not as to the actual situation, but as to the origin of that situation. They could say that we, with them, maintain that Christ must be thought of as now extended in His mystical body. They could say that they, with us, admit that this mystical body may be identified, and should be identified, in a

very special manner with Jesus of Nazareth : and, in most points, they can build up quite soundly, on such a basis, a theology which is very closely parallel to Catholic theology, and which appears to cover the great bulk of Catholic experience. Ultimately the decision as between such a Modernist synthesis, and more traditional conceptions, must rest on the full consideration of Modernism, on the sympathetic consideration of that view, and on its final adoption or rejection by thought which fully allows both for Christian experience and for the literary relics of the initial period, regarded in the light of that experience.

Ultimate authority for the rejection of Modernism can only be found in the fact that Catholic thought shall have fairly considered it and rejected it. But it is possible, as I believe, to see reasons, and very strong reasons, for the view that such rejection must occur, and that a Modernist synthesis of this character involves grave and fatal defects. The first but not the most important difficulties, in such a synthesis, arise from the actual literary relics which we have in the New Testament. In dealing with that field I do not propose to do more than indicate very briefly certain points. Any fuller discussion must be conducted on technical lines outside the scope of these lectures, and beyond my power. In the first place, it is very difficult to resist a conclusion that our Lord's conception of His unique position was not a deduction from His belief that He was called to be the Messiah ; but that His belief in His call to be the Messiah was based on a belief in a unique nature, in a unique

relation to the Father. It is very difficult to resist the conclusion that His consciousness of His Messiahship was based on His filial consciousness, rather than that the reverse was the case. Modernist conceptions require us to attach high importance to our Lord's religious experience. Since this experience must have suggested, or confirmed, His view of His person, then it is not easy either to deny that He had a unique existence, or that this unique existence was more than can be regarded as merely a marked advance in a natural order. Similar conclusions are strongly suggested by our Lord's attitude to sin, and to personal repentance. It is possible to over-state the New Testament argument for our Lord's sinlessness ; but a very strong argument remains. We have in the supreme example of the outlook, which became the Christian outlook, an absence of any trace of the personal repentance, which forms perhaps the most characteristic feature of that outlook in the case of those others who have best achieved it. That again very strongly suggests, not only a unique nature, but a nature which was more than a marked advance in the normal order.

Within the same field there is the whole problem presented by the records of miracles. It is not fashionable to use the argument from the miraculous element in the New Testament ; but I believe that there is a real tendency to exaggerate this reticence, and a tendency which is based on an inadequate philosophy of miracle. Miracle is commonly objected to, because it is supposed to contradict the doctrine

of the uniformity of nature. That doctrine states that the same things happen in the same way, but it also states that different things happen in different ways. If what was involved in the coming on earth of Jesus of Nazareth was something radically different from what took place in the genesis and birth of ourselves and other human beings; and if His ultimate position was something radically different from that of ourselves and other human beings; and if again the whole tendency is sound which leads us more and more to accept a close relation between the physical and spiritual; then we should expect to find abnormal happenings on the physical plane of our Lord's life. This is a view which is overlooked by many critics. I venture to suggest that these forget, when they get into such fields, that they are making judgments which really depend on a scientific insight; and that in general their instinct has not been educated in that direction. If there are twenty men who accept that scientific outlook, and who reject the Incarnation, I think you will find that nineteen of these would say that, if an Incarnation had taken place, it must have been accompanied by miracle.

What exactly is the argument to which I am leading up? It is certainly not that the mere statement that miracles took place is practical evidence in favour of the supernatural view of our Lord, as against some alternative natural explanation. It cannot be that, because we have other examples of somewhat similar stories; and we have certainly to recognize that such stories may, and do, grow out of the belief that they



ought to have taken place in regard to such a figure. If, however, it can be shown that the Christian narratives are more difficult to explain away than corresponding narratives, and if it can be shown that this difficulty is considerable, then it follows that you have some confirmation of a supernatural conception of our Lord's person as against the alternative doctrine.

It seems possible that the narratives of the supreme Christian miracles do possess certain rather peculiar features, if they have arisen merely as the result of pious speculation or pious delusion. Let me give one or two indications of what I have in mind. Supposing the account of the resurrection was a narrative which had arisen in this way, we should expect to find that the narrative was most conclusive in regard to visions of our Lord, and less conclusive in regard to the empty tomb; we should expect to find that the empty tomb was a secondary element. Now, for better or for worse, that is precisely what we do not find. We find the narrative far more clear, and far more conclusive, in regard to the empty tomb than in regard to the visions. So much is that the case, that there is a considerable critical tendency to accept the empty tomb but to explain it as due to some confusion as to the tomb, or some removal of our Lord's body. Such an explanation is of course a possible explanation. I want to point out, however, that we are faced with two alternative conceptions. With one of these conceptions, such a miracle is natural; with the other, it is practically inconceivable. We find evidence which points to the existence of the miracle, as against the



narrative being merely the work of pious thought. It is perfectly open to say, in this or any other particular instance, that such a feature in the evidence is due to some coincidence ; that there was, for example, a mistake over the tomb in just this crucial case ; but if that type of coincidence is to be multiplied in various directions, then such an alternative becomes open to grave suspicion.

I think it has to be multiplied in various directions. As Dr. Headlam has reminded us in regard to the miracle of the five thousand, in a recent article in *The Church Quarterly Review*, there again you find one of the more remarkable nature miracles embedded in the tradition in a way which would be regarded as giving a very high authority to the story, if it did not possess its miraculous character. Yet again, there is the question of the Virgin Birth. It is obvious that at that point, of all points, a supernatural view of our Lord's person suggests that there will be some difference from the normal process. I do not say that the supernatural view requires that there should have been a Virgin Birth. What it seems to me it does require—because, if the same things happen in the same way, different things happen in different ways—what it seems to me it does require, is that there should have been some great difference, and that difference should have extended to the physical plane. If that is the case then, in the light of the evidence, difficult as it is in certain points, we should naturally conclude that the difference in question consisted in a Virgin Birth. The point I want to make

is that, difficult as is this evidence in certain respects, it does present features which are considerably different to what we should expect, if it had simply grown up as the result of pious thought and delusion. We should not expect to find that a narrative, which has its parallels almost entirely in pagan myth, which one would expect to be peculiarly remote from pious Jewish thought, is yet peculiarly redolent of Jewish piety of a very primitive type. Finally, there is the whole problem presented by the Fourth Gospel. There again it is possible to say that this Gospel is simply an inspired and an imaginative meditation ; that it is completely removed from any historical basis. But there again, while it is impossible not to believe that there is a very large element of tradition and imagination, it is difficult to feel that this Gospel does not claim fundamentally historical authority ; or that the utter falsity of that claim can be so accounted for by the different literary traditions of a different age, as to involve no moral dishonesty on the part of the writer. On the other hand, if such dishonesty is present, it is very surprising that the Gospel should have its supreme spiritual value. In each of these cases we have facts which present very real difficulty if we reject a supernatural conception of our Lord's person.

The objections to Modernism which seem to be of gravest importance, are not objections taken simply from the literary relics. Christian experience led more and more to a very strong instinct in favour of the view that our spiritual life is drawn from (or

through) one person, at once human and divine ; that St. Paul's spiritual physiology was correct, and that the members are fed by the Head. It is conceivable that some Modernist theory may prove capable of satisfying the Christian instinct on other lines. Such a change would be comparable to, but not less drastic than, the change for physical science if the conception of action at a distance was finally admitted, and made the basis of its system. We cannot deny the possibility of such changes. Truth, and a more perfect satisfaction of educated instinct, may lie along lines less simple than those to which instinct at present points. If such proves to be the event, the earlier doctrine will in each case have been a valuable image of some theory, which was too complex to have been achieved before. On the other hand we have in each case the right to insist that very substantial grounds must be forthcoming for regarding in this light instincts which are not only deep-rooted, but which have proved of peculiar value in relating experience. Such instincts may well require real and substantial development ; they are less likely to be in need of quite drastic change.

In regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation, we have the further fact that there is an important range of experience which is covered by the traditional conception, but which does not fit into any Modernist theory. It is extraordinarily difficult to see how, on the Modernist view, you are to embody, and explain, the whole type of experience which is associated with the doctrines of Atonement and Redemption. This

experience appears to be very directly dependent on the conception of an Incarnation in the person of Jesus, and of our life as drawn from Him, or through Him. It is open to any Modernist to argue that in time such experience will prove to be relateable on his basis. What can be said is that every indication at present points in the opposite direction ; and it is significant that Modernist conceptions do, in general, tend to slur over the experience of which I am speaking. Modernism is far more disposed to deal with the doctrines of the Church and the Sacraments on the lines of a diffused Incarnation, than to face the harder problems of Redemption and Atonement. And yet we have only a superficial treatment of religious experience, if we fail to deal with that embodied in these doctrines. The Scriptural evidence is far from completely met by the Modernist theory ; the history of Christian thought points in another direction : central facts of experience are left unexplained and unrelated. Unless there are the gravest difficulties in accepting, in some form, the traditional conception, Modernism seems more likely to prove an instructive reaction from it than to provide the ultimate solution of the problem.

## LECTURE VII.





## LECTURE VII.

THE third great theory, which seeks to explain the Christian experience and the Christian records, is the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation. Such a doctrine finds strength in the objections, which I brought in my last lecture, against an improved form of Modernist theory. But it in turn is open to its own objections. In the first place, it is asserted that Christianity does not justify so tremendous an origin. It is urged by many that Christian theology does not bear much more relation to the experience of those who seek to follow it, than does a circus poster to a circus. It is well to put this crudely, even with apparent irreverence, because it is an objection very commonly felt, and very commonly felt by men of good-will. It is desirable that it should be clearly expressed, and fairly considered. The answer is obvious, and commonly made. It is that Christian experience is directly dependent upon faith, and immensely dependent upon faith. If that answer was merely an *ad hoc* answer, invented for the particular purpose of meeting this particular difficulty, then it is an answer which one would feel possible, but not perhaps convincing. It is not, however, an *ad hoc* contention. We found that it lay at the very basis of the whole intellectual construction of religious

experience, upon which we have ventured ; and, in consequence, we have the right to press that answer, just because it is founded upon a principle which had another, and more fundamental, origin.

Further the Christian experience is progressive. Let me illustrate the sort of effect, which that produces, by a somewhat crude parable. It so happened that until a relatively short time ago, I had never seen the Alps. On the other hand, I had been in contact with men who engaged in mountaineering, and I had come to realize something of the almost mystical significance which the great mountains acquired for such men ; a significance which is not infrequently a substitute for religion, and which in other cases is almost always related to it. When I first saw one of the greatest giants of the Swiss Alps, I had to confess to immense disappointment. I think I then used—and used only half in jest—the parallel I have just employed of the circus poster. What was the position ? Was my disappointment merely inability to appreciate, or had it any other cause ? What I wish to suggest to you is the obvious thought that such experience as comes to men familiar with these mountains is an experience dependent on the one hand on a continued familiarity, and on the other hand on familiarity only achieved from points of view, secured with great difficulty and great struggle. I do not wish to press that inadequate parable ; but it seems to me in certain degrees to be illuminating. The more fundamental point is that which I have already indicated, the fact that all religious experience is essentially conditioned

by belief. My parallel serves only to illustrate a second point. Progress in that experience, and familiarity with it, are essential before we can fully appreciate its significance.

Another great objection to the doctrine of the Incarnation, as traditionally accepted, is that it involves an intrusive, and cataclysmic, element in our world. Whether articulate or not, this is perhaps the most common ground for *a priori* rejection of the orthodox doctrine. It is this, which is most in the minds of those who will tell you that modern thought has made impossible belief in an Incarnation. Such men fully realize that we have in nature events which have all the appearance of cataclysm—the volcanic eruption is an obvious illustration. But they would point out that such events are credible, precisely because they are only the special manifestations of forces which are always operative. It is possible to retort to them, when they object to the cataclysmic nature, or the apparently cataclysmic nature, of the Incarnation, that this also may be regarded as but the special manifestation of forces which are always operative. We must, however, do more than merely make that statement. In the measure in which there is anything in the point of view of the objector, and it is certain that there is a great deal in that point of view, we are bound to amplify this reply.

We have to recognize that the forces which we hold to be always operative, and to find a special manifestation in the Incarnation, are forces not of the natural order. We have also to recognize that the special opera-

tion can only be consequent on special circumstances. We have in the first place to assert a real relation between God and the world, and a real reaction between these. If so much be conceded, and the outcome of our earlier argument was an insistence that it was proper to concede this, we are concerned with the question as to whether the Incarnation did, or did not, follow on certain exceptional conditions. It is important to point out that the view, that it did so follow, is again no *ad hoc* answer to this particular modern objection. It is an integral part of Christian theology. You are all of you familiar with the great insistence which that theology has laid, from time to time, on the preparation of the world for Christ ; and on the peculiar state of spiritual expectancy, which immediately preceded the Christian era, and extended beyond the Jewish people. If we hold that there is a reaction between God and the world, such a condition must have created very special circumstances. There is also another element in Christian theology which may be relevant in this connexion. From very early there has been a great insistence in Christian theology on the function of our Lady in regard to the Incarnation. Quite apart from the question as to whether the conception of our Lady's function in grace has been exaggerated or ill-developed, there is a much more fundamental view ; a view which finds its first expression in the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel, and which emphasises her character and faith. It is open to the Christian apologists not merely to insist that the Incarnation, if it took place, was subsequent to a general

condition of expectation and spiritual desire ; but to conceive that it was subsequent to a supreme act of faith, by one who represented the necessary culmination of merely human development.

Concede a real reaction between God and the world, and it is not improbable that in exceptional circumstances it may yield very special manifestations. The view that an incarnation took place in the person of our Lord has always asserted (on the double lines which I have indicated) that the antecedent circumstances were altogether exceptional. If that was all, we might have to admit that there was no collision with our conceptions of order, and of the relatedness of experience ; but we should have no immediate ground in these conceptions for the view in question. It is not all. As I pointed out in my last lecture, the traditional theory of the person and life of our Lord has proved of exceptional value in dealing with, and relating, that ordinary religious experience which represents the normal working of the relation of God and man. The supposition of the special manifestation provides our most reliable theory of normal experience. It is in consequence neither arbitrary nor unrelated.

It must, of course, be recognized that, if we are to suppose unique circumstances to have produced a unique effect, we must expect other really exceptional circumstances to issue in remarkable events. The supreme miracle of the Incarnation implies lesser and recurrent "miracles". It may legitimately be doubted whether the records of these always receive sufficient consideration ; even if it is certain that they are often



accepted with uncritical credulity. Nothing, indeed, is more likely to throw light on the probability of a supreme miracle, than the critical, but unbiassed, study of such records; of the degree in which they are fully explicable as fiction, or fully accountable on naturalistic hypotheses. We have the right to insist that there has been a considerable tendency to prejudge such questions in the liberal, as well as in the orthodox, direction; but we must freely recognize the great importance of such lines of investigation.

There is a more general consideration with which it is well to deal in this connexion. It is somewhat superficial to seek a supreme analysis in terms of order rather than in terms of purpose. It must be so if, as I have tried to urge, belief in God is a rational and proper belief. Our religious experience must then be regarded as peculiarly significant, and as our best guide to the ultimate nature of reality. It is, however, in our religious experience that we most clearly find that the category of order is inadequate; and that the direct use of the category of purpose is the only satisfactory guide. It is not, of course, possible to translate that conclusion into an acceptance of promiscuous interference; into an acceptance of special providences which holds that everything, which happens, happens by the direct will of God, and not merely by His permissive will. That is not true, apart from any other reason, because of the frequency of disasters, and because of the lack of relation between particular disasters and desirable effects. Although the view I am putting precludes



us from accepting a mechanical conception of order, as an ultimate account of life, there must be elements in the Divine purpose, and in the conditions of its operation, which lead to a general appearance of such order.

It is possible to see considerations which would produce such an appearance. On the one hand there may well be the condition that direct intervention only occurs as a response to exceptional faith, and to progress in that faith. In the second place (to return by way of illustration to the question of disasters) it is well to remember that, while no useful purpose may be served directly by any particular disaster, the fact that such disasters may occur, the fact that we cannot feel that we are continually swimming through this world with a lifebelt, is a fact which is probably responsible for much that is best in human nature. It is in consequence a fact which, in some degree, serves to explain why we are thus left to ourselves. The general regularity of our experience, the absence of frequent interference, can be explained satisfactorily on such and similar lines. An assumption that such regularity is ultimate lands us in real difficulty, in view of the character of religious experience.

It is just possible that it is worth while to mention a different point. The scientific utility of the conception that nature is a system which is running down, if it does not suggest creation as a final answer, does at least imply the inadequacy of our present conception of mechanical order. It implies that the view of an

*ab extra* initial catastrophe, which is involved in creation, is at least a symbol of some further and necessary truth. And, in regard to the Incarnation, we are not concerned to assert that our conception of it is necessarily final: we are not concerned to do more than contend in a similar manner, that here again there is another example of the inadequacy of conceptions of a mechanical, or quasi-mechanical, order.

Before we pass on there is one further argument which it is well to notice, because it is an argument employed in this connexion but an argument which is inherently unsound. We are sometimes told that we may set aside the categories of a quasi-mechanical evolution, and accept the conception of an Incarnation, because the higher examples of genius are always catastrophic. We have set forth as illustrations the art of Greece, the poetry of Shakespeare, and the work of any of the greater artists. Such an argument might be used in support of the improved form of Modernism, with which I was dealing in the last lecture. It might be used in support of that form of Modernism against some less adequate variety. But while it fits such a form of Modernism, it has got no relevance to the doctrine of an Incarnation, precisely because such a sudden exhibition of genius is essentially a development in the natural order. It is the type of development contemplated by that form of Modernism, rather than the more intrusive occurrence which traditional theology conceives to have taken place in the case of the Incarnation.

There is a quite different *a priori* argument which is used not infrequently, and in an increasing degree, against belief in an incarnation. It is urged that the moral value of our Lord's example passes away, precisely in the measure in which it is held that He was incapable of sin. We are told that the example of a climber, climbing difficult cliffs, ceases to be inspiring, exactly in the measure in which he is incapable of slipping. Such an illustration carries its own answer. The more skilful the climber, the more valuable is his example. What is required for this to be so is simply that the success should involve real effort. If the climber could not slip, because he had a rope round him, and was held from the top of the cliff, the argument would be valid; but it would not be a true analogy to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. A truer analogy lies in the conception of a climber who, so long as he continually made a supreme effort, could avoid slipping; and who continually did make such supreme effort. Such a parallel cannot be said to be without inspiration or value; rather it would have supreme inspiration, and supreme value.

To turn to particular objections: it is urged that on one highly important point the teaching of our Lord was demonstrably false. It is urged that He prophesied not merely that He would return again in power and great glory; but that He would do so within the near future. It appears in the Gospels that our Lord prophesied that this return in triumph would be accomplished within the generation. And unless the record of such a prophecy can be regarded

as mistaken, the possibility of believing in a triumphant coming in the future does not help us to avoid the conclusion that our Lord was mistaken as to the immediacy of the event.

The most obvious escape from the difficulty lies in the assumption that the assertion of the immediacy of the second coming was put into the mouth of our Lord by the early disciples; possibly through their misunderstanding, and applying to the second coming, statements about the imminence of the fall of Jerusalem; possibly simply from excess of zeal. In practice many hold some such view, combining it with a literal acceptance of the imagery employed in regard to the coming. There is, however, the gravest difficulty in holding that our Lord did not prophesy an early second coming, as well as apply to it the terms of current apocalyptic imagery. The difficulty does not lie only in the fact that this is asserted in the Gospels, or even in the fact that recent criticism has made more difficult the view that the passages in question are out of keeping with the general character of the teaching, or that they are unrelated to the development of purpose and action which is represented. An equally serious objection is that the early Pauline Epistles make clear that the Disciples expected an early second coming, and that this expectation held an important position in their conception of the Gospel. We should be unable to hold conclusive the evidence for very much of our Lord's teaching, if we were to deny that the belief in question had an origin in this. It is fortunate, in consequence,

that historical canons are seriously violated, if we fail to ascribe such an origin to an Apostolic doctrine which was at once early, strong, and central.

Such a conclusion leaves us, however, in a difficult position; for it appears to imply a grave mistake in our Lord's teaching, and a mistake which reflects on His authority. A well-known attempt to explain our Lord's view asserts that He shared the prophetic tendency to foreshorten the future; and for this reason expected a less slow and more catastrophic expression of the Divine Will, than actually occurred. It is hard, however, not to feel that, when such a tendency appears, it represents a certain failure in balance of outlook. If this be the explanation in our Lord's case, His human perfection is definitely impaired. It is possible to ascribe to our Lord limited knowledge without impairing this; it is another matter to ascribe lack of balance, intellectual if not moral; and all the more so, since the two are not wholly separable. No doubt the prophet's vision, and enthusiasm, make the balanced outlook almost impossible; but we excuse the prophet, and can only do so, because no claim is made of perfection.

How can we meet the difficulty, or find any indication of a solution? I wish to suggest that, while we must accept the prophecy of an early fulfilment, we are justified in not taking literally the imagery used as to it; and that what took place within the generation justified both the use of such imagery and the time element introduced. The question arises as to what warrant there is for not taking literally the



descriptive elements. There is first of all the fact that the language is obviously that of imagery. What is of even greater importance is that this imagery was very largely not original; it was adopted, at least in its general character, from current apocalyptic. Not only did such language exist before our Lord employed it, but there is evidence that a stream of thought, which specially believed in a personal and supernatural Messiah, had come to couch its expectations in just such language. When the language of imagery is used we have never the right to assume that literal fulfilment is necessarily expected. When the imagery is conventional, the probability is greatly diminished. Its use here is associated with a very strong assertion of ignorance as to the event; at least in one point, and perhaps generally. When we find that the language of imagery is accompanied by conscious ignorance of this description, it is wholly gratuitous to suppose that the language was not more or less deliberately used as imagery.

Even if we may regard the descriptive elements in these Messianic prophecies as imagery, we are however concerned to argue that they were good imagery, and not bad: also that our Lord may not have been able to give clearer teaching. Let us take these two points in order. The first and obvious reason for the use of such imagery lies in the fact that its associations were Messianic, and in the fact that by applying characteristic Messianic imagery to Himself, our Lord could, and did, lay claim to the Messiahship.



Obviously, however, we have not merely to justify the adoption, and deliberate use, of the title "Son of Man" with the associations suggested by the imagery in question. We have to justify also the deliberate adoption of the Messianic prophecies. We do so if, but only if, ideas, well expressed by such imagery, received a substantial fulfilment.

What are the underlying ideas to which the imagery corresponded? I would suggest three; final triumph, a personal coming, a coming in judgment. I would urge that all these received a real fulfilment within the first generation. Consider another passage, to which Mr. Temple has drawn attention in this connexion, although with a slightly different purpose. St. Luke represents our Lord as sending the Seventy to preach, and when on their return they report the subjection of the Devils, represents Him as replying, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven". In this case our Lord expresses in similar imagery a realization of the great significance of this first missionary journey. Already the death blow was struck at the powers of darkness—the course of action thus initiated would prove fatal. Is not a similar interpretation possible in regard to the Messianic prophecies? Within the first generation there came that outpouring which is reflected in the Pentecostal narrative; and almost literally within the generation Christianity had taken root as a religion. A position was thus secured very early which implied that, if Christianity was true, it must inevitably spread and triumph. Appreciation

of the doctrine of the Mystical Body showed this triumph to involve a real, if progressive, coming. In the Fourth Gospel we have the realization that by Christ's presence men are judged. Approving or rejecting, all that remains is that the significance of their choice shall become manifest eventually. Give to each of these points the significance which Catholic thought has felt to be necessary on independent grounds, and you will have to allow that, in a very real sense, all was accomplished within the generation; even while, from a complementary point of view, we have still to look forward, and to pray "Thy Kingdom come".

On such a view, what was our Lord's attitude to the imagery He used? Reverence makes one hesitate to answer, but an answer must be attempted. Did He realize how very far the truth was from any literal fulfilment? It seems probable that in some degree He did. Other teaching is recorded, which strongly suggests that our Lord thought also of the coming of the Kingdom as progressive and evolutionary, and its final accomplishment as likely to be long deferred. On the other hand, it is difficult to feel that He knew the future at all exactly; and His own assertion, of at least partial ignorance, removes any presumption from such a view. If we conceive Him as having supreme insight, but as being without omniscience in His human consciousness, and struggling, as all other men struggle, to explain life and His own experience, here as elsewhere we must conceive Him as forced to adopt, both for Himself and in His teaching, what

seemed to Him the least inadequate of available conceptions. I have tried to show that the eschatology adopted was good symbol and not bad : and on such a view this is sufficient justification for its adoption and use. Only actual experience of the future made possible conceptions which expressed, in terms of the events, their deep significance. Until these became available, a far less adequate outlook would have been realized had our Lord not adopted and used the conceptions of current eschatology. We have, as I have suggested, reason to suppose that these were accepted with reserve. That they were not only accepted with reserve but accepted, and used, seems to me what we have the right to regard as most consistent with a true perfection. There is no more striking characteristic of great teachers than their power to choose best between inadequate conceptions, when none are available which would be perfect. The test of their method lies in their inculcating no such attitude to the conceptions in question, as makes difficult the transition, when better become available. And there are few things more surprising than the relative ease of the transition of thought, in regard to these matters, which took place even within New Testament times.

The whole range of difficulties, which are associated with our Lord's use of the Old Testament, and of current demonology, can be dealt with on similar lines. Indeed, in the case of these, the difficulty is far less. No immediate purpose was to be served by the reconsideration of current opinions in such matters, and no question can be raised as to the propriety of our

Lord's being content to adopt current ideas, and to employ these in His teaching. Energy of mind, as well as body, were fully required in more relevant directions ; and no difficulty is presented, unless you insist on ascribing to Him omniscience within His human consciousness.

LECTURE VIII.





## LECTURE VIII.

I DEALT at the end of the last lecture with objections to the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation, objections which were based on the argument that our Lord was so mistaken in His theology as to imply lack of balance, intellectual and even moral. Let us turn now to similar objections in regard to His ethical practice and teaching, and in the first place to those objections which are urged against His practice. The force of such objections turns very much on our general view of Scripture. They hold, primarily, only against a view which treats the New Testament as verbally inspired, or as at least free from any ascription to our Lord of actions or words, which He did not do, or which He did not speak. Unless such a view of inspiration is accepted, we must expect to find, and have the right to point out, that there will inevitably have been confusion in the records; and no less inevitably a tendency to give expression to, and to ascribe to our Lord, apostolic ideals.

The argument for our Lord's sinlessness is not based on the discovery that there are no examples recorded which we can describe as sin, but is of a far more positive character. It is based on His attitude to repentance. It may be noted in passing that it is because the argument is of this character, that we are

justified in accepting the text "Why callest thou Me good? None is good, save one, even God," although we do not take its most immediate meaning. We cannot empty such a text of all significance. It is not one which we can ascribe to apostolic influence ; but in face of the positive argument I have indicated, we are justified in finding its explanation, not in the fact that our Lord was conscious of sin, but in the fact that He was conscious of temptation, and realized that perfection of development (although not necessarily perfection at any stage in development) must involve the absence of temptation.

We are only indirectly concerned with the further question as to whether this text is in collision with the Catholic doctrine of the deity of our Lord. It is, of course, an assertion that if God, he was also man. It is not more. The conception of the Godhead had not been developed in the degree which Christian thought found to be necessary. Our Lord's words and much Pauline language present no difficulty for Catholic thought, when once it is realized that for the Jews the connotation of the word "God" involved ideas which are only true of the Father.

Apart from the general consideration that we are likely to have the ascription to our Lord of apostolic, and possibly faulty, ethical conceptions, the particular arguments which can be found against our Lord's sinlessness, and which, if necessary, might be dealt with in that way, are surprisingly weak. And in this we have confirmation, in some degree, for the acceptance of sinlessness. Among the most common objec-

tions are those based on the miracle of the Gadarene swine, and on the miracle of the fig tree. Not only are both of these examples where confusion is very possible, and very conceivable ; but it is as a matter of fact extremely doubtful whether, even if they were true, they represent any ethical failure. I would go further, and urge that it is extremely probable that they teach a valuable ethical lesson. They are, of course, a contradiction of a certain sentimentalism, more prevalent in the last century than in this. Just because that attitude of mind is passing away, they find a new force in their assertion of the principle, in view of which we accept, and feel confident in accepting, the practice of vivisection. They imply that it is legitimate and right to sacrifice lesser creatures, where the gain is real.

A more serious objection is based on our Lord's recounted treatment of the Holy Family, in the incident which centres round the text "Who is My mother and My brethren?" It is difficult not to feel that, if the incident is exactly as reported, one's best instincts would have wished to find some other, and balancing, factor in our Lord's attitude. But we may, I think, point out that this is just the sort of case, where tradition might cut out a balancing factor so as to emphasize only one side of what took place. It is not merely a question as to whether something that was then said may have been left out ; but whether there may have been, as a background to that particular speech, a general attitude of our Lord to His family, which gave added significance to that speech,

but prevented any element of neglect being even conceivable. With some reserve I would wish to suggest that, just on this point, it is not improbable that there may also have been a certain bias in apostolic circles. There is a certain amount of evidence which suggests that, at the very beginning of the apostolic period, there was something amounting to the establishment of a "caliphate," based on relationship to our Lord : and, if that be the case, it is not improbable, and there seem to be some indications, that there was a clash of interests between the Apostolic ministry and the family of our Lord.

Apart from such particular criticisms, we have to deal with two lines of argument of a far more general character. The first denies the validity of the most fundamental principles of Christian ethics. It asserts, for example, that the Christian emphasis on self-sacrifice is an emphasis which is largely, or wholly, misplaced. Our reply to that argument must be a reversion to our main contention. If it is true that the highest authority in theology is likely to be Christian, and Catholic, thought ; then it is obvious that such an argument is out of court, until it can show that there is some tendency within such thought to get away from these fundamental ethical conceptions. It is equally obvious that such thought has tended wholly in the other direction.

An argument which requires much fuller discussion is that, which accepts such fundamental principles as the assertion of the duty of self-sacrifice, but urges that our Lord applied these in a faulty and crude

manner. It asserts that our Lord taught, for example, that promiscuous charity was a universal duty, and non-resistance a universal obligation ; and it would urge that such views as these cannot be accepted as final. No doubt His error was a noble error ; but, from the point of view which I am trying to emphasize, it remains an error. If we concede the view that, in enunciating these rules of conduct, our Lord was laying down universal rules, as well as applying universal principles, no doubt there is a real difficulty ; but there is little reason to make that concession. It has been a mark of the greatest teachers of all time that, while they based their teaching on universal principles, their actual teaching was concrete. They applied their principles to deal with their own generation. Subsequent generations have to seek to discover what ultimate principles are directly expressed, or implied, in rules of conduct : they have to seek to discover also how far the latter are applicable in their own conditions ; they cannot assume that this last will always be the case.

If such a view is accepted, then our attitude to the ethical teaching in question is fundamentally changed. We have to keep in mind three considerations which may, and indeed which must, involve qualifications of rules of conduct. In the first place, conditions may be so different now from what they were in Galilee during the period of our Lord's earthly life, as to mean that the same ultimate principle would find a different expression. Let me take one example : it does not at all follow that the ultimate principle of charity



would imply the same rules in these two conditions. In the one case you have an entire absence, or almost an entire absence, of organized charity ; in the other case you have a considerable, and not unsuccessful, attempt to systematize and organize charitable effort. It does not follow that a rule as to promiscuous charity which was desirable in the one case, which inevitably followed from the fundamental principle in that case, would be desirable or implied in the other.

A second consideration of equal and perhaps of even greater importance is that the function of any rule of conduct may not turn on its being a universal implication of some principle, but on its having an educative purpose. If we accept the view that such a construction is one element in the explanation of the rules with which I am dealing, we find a key to the problem which fits well with the facts of experience. There is no more effective method of drawing attention to principles which have been forgotten, or are in danger of being forgotten, than to set aside all other considerations as to practice, and to apply these principles in their crudest and simplest form. Such a method was not merely effective at the beginning of the Christian era, it has been effective again and again since within Christianity, and in addition in other fields. The Franciscan revival is a noticeable example of the effect of precisely the same method. If we find that certain rules were justified, and will always be justified, on such lines ; then we have no right to assume that their justification must necessarily lie elsewhere, or to object because they cannot be defended on that other basis.



The third consideration we have to keep in view is the conception, which has been advanced by certain critics, and which regards much of the Gospel ethics, and especially those points with which we are concerned, as *interim* ethics. Such critics insist that our Lord conceived that the world was coming to an end within a relatively short period ; and that He gave, and quite properly gave, ethical teaching which depended on this view. I have already tried to indicate what seems to be a more balanced view of our Lord's eschatology ; what I wish to point out is, that, if the view I tried to advance is correct, the doctrine of *interim* ethics does remain as a real factor. It does follow that if you are on the eve of a great and supreme change, conditions are fundamentally different from normal conditions. This has a special bearing in regard to purposive rules, of the type with which I have just been dealing. Such rules have in view the education of society. For just that reason, it is desirable that in any circumstances some should accept these rules in their entirety, and all in some degree : and in exceptional circumstances it is proper, for just that reason, to urge their acceptance by all who have ears to hear.

The danger of such a view of Christian ethics is that it seems to imply a lowering of Christian standards, and of the Christian ideal. That danger only exists in the measure in which the view I have been trying to put is regarded superficially. It insists on a character for these rules which implies that it is always desirable that some should follow them quite

strictly, and that all should be prepared to adopt them in some degree. I do not think that such an insistence on the need of complete and literal acceptance of the Gospel rules, for purposes of the ethical education of society, can be said to represent a lower ideal than others which are in competition with it. It may be maintained that such a view urges a very high ideal for some, at the expense of a lowering of that ideal for the rest. This we can flatly deny. It was no doubt a legitimate objection to some ethical teaching in the Middle Ages. Such teaching not infrequently conceived the religion of the layman, or of the secular cleric, as the religion of the monk sufficiently diluted. The point of view I am putting before you is that, in the case alike of the monk or friar and of the secular or layman, their actions must be based on the same ultimate principles; that the duties, for example, of self-sacrifice and of charity apply to all in an equal degree. The difference comes in the view that in the one case these duties are expressed in the simplest possible form, in a form only justified by its educative influence; while, in the other, all sorts of complications are involved, complications which do not imply a lower standard, but which do imply different rules. It is true that the sacrifice of the monk or friar entails the greater hardships; but the self-dedication of the secular or the layman *ought* not to be less complete and he has to face difficulties in its application from which the monk is free. It may be that he should have a different code of rules, but it is certain that these should not be the

expression of different, or lower, principles; and it is equally certain that they are more difficult to formulate.

Before I pass on, it is perhaps desirable to apply such considerations to one problem in this field, which has inevitably been forced upon us. It is urged that Christianity, honestly conceived, regards the teaching of non-resistance as a principle and not a rule. On the other hand Christian thought has declined to accept the view that it is always wrong to take to arms. Some of the irritation which is occasioned by pacificism is due to the inconsistency of its exponents. We find men adopting a literalist view when it implies comparative safety, while failing to observe teaching of equal authority which implies selling all that they have and giving to the poor. Yet, while a good deal of pacificism may be criticized on these and other lines, there remains a good deal which is fine and noble even if we hold it mistaken.

The question is, how we are to answer such pacificism, apart from the possibility of criticizing particular expressions of it? In the first place, as commonly expressed, it involves a very large assumption in political philosophy. We are told that Christianity enjoins the duty of submission, and we are told that our country ought to submit to any treatment. Let us set aside altogether the question of interference on behalf of weak or suffering nations: and let us narrow the issue to the question of a war which is directly defensive. Even in that case the argument is open to grave objection. It is an essential factor

in Christian ethics, and recognized as such, that ultimate ethical principles apply to individuals. If you are to apply the doctrine of non-resistance to the state immediately, you have to assume that the state is a person in the sense in which the individual is a person.

It is, of course, easy to caricature that criticism, by saying that I am urging that Christian ethics should not apply to international politics. I am doing nothing of the sort. Nations are made up of individuals, and in their political duties, as well as in their private duties, individuals are bound by the considerations of Christian ethics. Further, they are bound to see that their national tradition emphasizes this fact ; but it is very doubtful whether such a view does not preclude an invariable refusal to fight. If we hold that Christian ethics apply immediately to individual souls, then the duty of self-sacrifice may involve your facing death by the sword for the sake of other individuals. Even if you could conceive a nation every member of which was fully prepared to accept the sacrifice involved in national defeat, you have still to face the problem of posterity. It is surely of the essence of the moral value of non-resistance that it is deliberate personal self-sacrifice ; and if that is so, those who are members of a nation at a particular period, even if they were unanimously prepared to accept the sacrifice, have no right to sacrifice a far larger posterity.

So far I have taken simply an argument which assumes that, when we are bidden not to resist evil,

it means evil to ourselves. It is of course urged that we have a more general instruction. There is very little reason, however, for regarding as ultimate the rule in question. In the first place, we have those considerations which are based on the particular conditions. When our Lord gave His teaching, armed resistance to the Roman dominion was definitely advocated. It both was hopeless in practice and implied an inadequate conception of the Kingdom. Christ's teaching constituted a necessary condemnation of the policy and ideals of the zealot. On the other hand our Lord had not to deal with an opposite problem. All that Christianity holds good in Roman civilization, was safely established, and not at issue. Now we have to face not merely the problem of changing what is bad in our civilization, but the problem of preserving what is good. It does not follow that rules applicable in the one case are applicable in the other. Again, there is the effect of the purposive view of these rules which I have tried to put before you. If that view is adopted, then it is obvious that an argument from different conditions comes with double force, as does also the problem presented by posterity.

Let me emphasize finally one particular scriptural argument in favour of a purposive view of the doctrine of non-resistance. Our Lord is represented as bidding St. Peter put up the sword because "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". We can recognize the propriety of the command, and of the reason, if we conceive the command to have been



based on the necessity that St. Peter and the Apostles should not so perish before their ministry was accomplished ; or if we conceive the command as dictated by the necessity for keeping clear that our Lord's Kingdom was not of this world, for avoiding such a history as that of Islam. But if you are to regard the reason our Lord gave for that command as an ultimate ethical reason, valid against any resort to arms, is it too much to say that the Christian instinct is revolted ? Which best represents that instinct—a Russian practice of sewing into the hats of soldiers the text “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” or an attitude which abstains from fighting *on the ground that they who take the sword shall perish with the sword* ?

There remains the whole field of historical objection to the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation, objections based on the view that our literary records do not correspond to what is supposed to have taken place. As I have already said, any technical discussion of such questions is outside the scope of these lectures. All I can seek to do is to urge certain fundamental considerations. We have no doubt to recognize quite fully, and quite frankly, the reality of our Lord's humanity, and our error in the past through failure to make this recognition. We have also to recognize the considerable degree in which Apostolic thought has affected our actual records. On the other hand it seems far from clear that a complete change of view is really required, or prob-



ably correct. I have tried to indicate points where the literary relics appear to leave residual difficulties on the alternative theory. Such exist also for the traditional belief ; but it seems not improbable that they are at bottom of a less serious character, that if supernatural conceptions be treated as not inherently improbable, the records are far from precluding these conceptions.

The problems of our Lord's knowledge and ethical teaching have been already discussed. There is, however, a further problem. On lines already indicated, if our Lord was in His own person Incarnate God, we should expect nature miracles ; and we find real difficulties in the accounts of these. There are, for example, the confusion in the narratives of the Resurrection appearances, and the absence of early reference to the Virgin Birth. It is possible to explain the former as confusion, due to natural causes, and, considerable as it is, as not unfamiliar in an equal degree in many narratives of startling events. It is possible to deal with the latter by suggesting reticence on the part of our Lady, and, possibly, by the suggestion of some tendency to conflict between the Apostles and the relatives of our Lord. When all has been said, difficulties remain. The problem is really whether these are greater than the residual difficulties of the alternative theory, and whether they are so considerably greater as to outweigh the weakness of that theory in regard to religious experience. To myself it seems, rightly or wrongly, that the residual difficulties for the Modernist theory involve, in a special degree,

the acceptance of *ad hoc* explanations, none of which are impossible but none of which are very natural. And in such a case every multiplication of that process weakens the probability of the theory in question. In the case of the traditional doctrines the difficulties again require considerable explanation ; but the lines of possible solution appear to fit more naturally into the general view, or into some general modification of that view. To say the least, I find it hard to see that the difficulties of the traditional view, or the advantages of Modernism, are at all sufficient to overcome the conclusion suggested, when we attempt to apply these theories to deal with religious experience.

We are faced by a conception of the Incarnation which is not only the outcome of a deep-rooted instinct in that thought most closely in touch with religious experience ; but which is our most successful key to that experience, and one which alone seems adequate in certain fields. The obvious fact, that the resulting acceptance of "miracle" was carried much too far, made reaction inevitable, and makes modification necessary. It does not affect a presumption that so effective a conception is likely to possess considerable foundation, and to require adjustment rather than rejection. Another view would only follow, if the traditional conception of the Incarnation was essentially less satisfactory than Modernism in dealing with some set of problems ; or if it landed us in theories which were inadequate and incapable of satisfactory modification ; or if the underlying conception of the supernatural was inherently improbable. Just because the

antecedent probability is in favour of the modification, rather than the abandonment, of a view which has proved so valuable a key to our experience, discussion of that view has been mainly a discussion of objections. As I have indicated, I cannot but feel that these are never adequate, and that their consideration not infrequently points in an opposite direction. It seems reasonable to conclude with considerable certainty that a solution in Christology will lie in the development of the traditional conception, rather than on the lines of Modernism.

One inevitably hesitates to set aside the views of a school at once learned, confident and vigorous. And this hesitation is necessarily increased by respect for the historical method, and a sense of the importance of its results. The crucial conclusions are, however, admittedly determined primarily by a particular pre-supposition as to the miraculous. It is just here that Modernist theologians have not only been greatly influenced by Liberal Protestant thought, but that they have been least critical of that thought. On the other hand, we have seen that such thought might well result in the combination of an impressive consensus with fundamental errors. In discussing alternative conceptions as to the supernatural, we found much to suggest that here lies a case in point.

It is for time to show how far such a rejection of Modernism is well founded, or whether it is merely the outcome of a natural conservatism. I have tried to indicate possible lines of discussion, as well as the conclusions which these seem to me at present to

suggest. What I am most concerned to urge is that the ultimate court of appeal in this, as in every theological question, must be a consensus of such thought as is considerate of new opinions, but freely and fully accepts the relevance of religious experience, and freely and fully recognizes such experience. If that is so, those who believe in traditional Christology (and wish to see it firmly established) must be prepared to exercise patience and, incidentally, not to demand the excommunication of all who differ. On the other hand, they have the right to urge much greater insistence on a correct method of approach to these questions, on the recognition of the value of traditional theology, and on the acceptance of religious experience.

For the rest, while it seems probable that truth will lie in a development, not of Modernism, but of traditional Christology, we must expect to find that any adequate solution is far richer and more complex than past conceptions of that doctrine.

May I illustrate what I mean by an instance from the history of one of the sciences? When the atomic theory was enunciated, it consisted in an assertion that matter was made up of certain indivisible units. We now know that these units are far from indivisible. But our more modern doctrine is not a contradiction of the atomic theory, for it recognizes and fully allows that it itself involves an acknowledgment that the atom is a real unit. Its discovery does not contradict the earlier discovery of this unity, but merely asserts that this unity was too simply conceived.

General considerations appear to favour some development in regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation, rather than a rejection of the fundamental conception which finds expression in the creeds. Any adequate development of the doctrine seems scarcely likely to be less real than that which I have quoted.





LECTURE IX.



## LECTURE IX.

BEFORE we pass next to the discussion of one or two illustrative problems, some attempt should be made to indicate a conception of Scripture, in face of which that discussion can take place, for the view we adopt of the authority of Scripture must very largely determine our procedure. Catholic thought came to perceive that the Scriptures were highly inspired. In regard to this discovery there took place what is a common phenomenon in any branch of thought, in regard to any notable advance ; there was a tendency to exaggerate, and to draw certain negative conclusions. Exactly the same process occurred in regard to the doctrine of inspiration, which occurred in regard to the doctrine of the person of our Lord, and in regard to the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. There was in each case a tendency to minimize the human, or the natural, element. On the other hand, such an admission does not remove the very important implications which are involved in any recognition of the reality of inspiration.

What then is the conclusion which we may draw, in view of a general belief in Catholic thought, from the fact that some particular book is included in the canon of Scripture? Primarily the conclusion must surely be that it was recognized that the book in

question either presented a high degree of inspiration, or had come to be used in some mystical manner, which gave to this use a high spiritual value. Such a view asserts that inclusion in the canon depended on the recognition of the spiritual value of the book in question; and in general on its inspiration. I say "in general on its inspiration," because we have in different degrees examples of books, which in their first use were far from spiritual, but on which a mystical and highly valuable interpretation can be placed. An obvious example is the Song of Songs. The point, to which it is well to draw attention, is that the authority of any book, and the meaning of the book for us, lies in the meaning which determined its inclusion in the canon, or which determined the spiritual value that led to this inclusion. In consequence, it does not follow that, for example, the Song of Songs should be excised from our Bibles, because its original meaning was not that which the Church has placed upon it: its meaning and authority lie in the meaning which it came to acquire, and in regard to which it has been held valuable.

There is a further consideration to which it is well to draw attention. On the view suggested, there is a real distinction between the authority of a book in the Old Testament, and the authority of a book in the New Testament. The Old Testament, speaking broadly, was taken over from Jewish theological thought as a whole; the New Testament Books were selected by Christian thought one by one. It follows that Christian thought guarantees the value of the Old

Testament as a whole ; but that it does not guarantee the value and inspiration of individual books in the Old Testament, in the same degree in which it guarantees this for books in the New Testament. It does not follow we can deny the value and inspiration even of particular books in the Old Testament, simply on this ground. We are bound to affirm that Jewish theology reached a very high degree of insight, even although it did not reach such a degree of insight as was achieved by Christian thought. We may however say that the authority of any particular book in the Old Testament is less than the authority of any particular book in the New Testament.

There is yet another point in regard to the Christian Gospels themselves. There is a certain tendency to regard these as blurred photographs ; to say that we must endeavour, with all modern appliances, to detect and to remove the blurs, and to reconstruct as far as possible the original photograph. The view which I am trying to suggest to you points in another direction. It implies that we are bound to take any one of the Gospels, not as a blurred photograph, but as a picture and an interpretative picture. On such a view any actual Gospel is a better spiritual presentation than a blurred photograph, or very possibly than a correct photograph. It is a picture, but a good picture, a valuable interpretation. Such a view does not belittle the importance of critical study. However valuable the total effect of any picture, we shall gain considerably by the endeavour to ascertain how far this or that particular in the picture has its

value only in a contribution to the whole effect, or how far it is itself an accurate presentation. On the other hand, the view I am putting does preclude a not uncommon tendency, especially among those who have a slight acquaintance with critical study, and who are inclined to underline certain portions of the New Testament as assured critically, while ignoring the rest. I would venture to suggest that if we wish to have the best understanding of the Bible, and of its significance, we have to get back to the whole Bible.

Let me illustrate what I mean by an analogy. You have probably seen one of those roods, in which our Lord is represented upon the crucifix, robed and crowned, reigning from the tree. It is obvious that the accessories to that picture, and indeed the general character of that picture, are far from true to literal fact. On the other hand, there is no doubt, if the Christian religion be well founded, that such a representation does present, and bring home, the deepest meaning of the Incarnation and of the Atonement. So with the Gospels ; this or that particular may, or may not, be literally true ; sometimes we are able to determine the probability of its truth, more commonly such an inquiry must at best be indecisive. The point I wish to put to you is that any particular in a Gospel does contribute to the general picture that Gospel presents, to the general spiritual conception which it conveys ; and that this general conception must be accepted as valuable. In consequence, you cannot afford to excise particulars, which contribute to that conception, simply by the test of their historical accuracy.



There is a final point, with which we shall be at once concerned, and that is the whole question of our conception of the authority of apostolic thought. On any such views of authority and inspiration as those which I have endeavoured to work out, or to indicate, we cannot regard apostolic thought as exhaustive or final. Just in the measure in which we regard the apostles as inspired, but not as mere automata of inspiration, we are bound to allow for the limitations and characteristics of human psychology. We are bound to suppose that, in apprehending the most important truths, there would in all probability have been a tendency not to work out thought in other and complementary directions. Such is a result of the mere importance of selective interest in the processes of thought. On the other hand, unless we hold the Christian tradition to have been wholly wrong in believing in the inspiration of apostolic thought as embodied in our canon, it is absurd to suppose that we have not there the best indication of the meaning of our Lord's teaching, when we have positive assertion on fundamental points. When it becomes a question as to whether some modern critic, or St. Paul, was the more likely to be right in interpreting and giving embodiment to our Lord's mind, then a conclusion in favour of the modern critic is very rarely consistent with belief in apostolic inspiration.

I want to illustrate these views, and to use these views, of inspiration and authority, in regard to certain current controversies. I propose to take first the doctrine of the Communion of the Saints, as it

has been understood in Catholic thought, and then the doctrine of the Eucharist. I take the first of these doctrines, not because of its special importance, although it has an importance in current controversy ; but because it is an illustration of the conception of apostolic thought which I have put before you. The points which are at issue are the question of the propriety of prayers for the dead, and of fuller recognition of the prayers of the Saints. It is objected that we do not find prayers for the dead in the New Testament, and the same is stated in regard to any emphasis on the prayers of the Saints. It is possible to urge that this objection is greatly exaggerated. In the first place, the context and terms, in which St. Paul is represented as praying for Onesiphorus, that he may find mercy in the day of judgment, are just possibly explained by his friend having already departed. Whatever may be the case there, it is difficult to give any natural meaning to the curious allusion to baptism for the dead, unless we suppose the Apostolic Church believed that actions here on earth were capable of influencing the state of the departed. It might be urged, in view of that reference, that what has taken place in the Church has not been an extension of belief in the possibility of such influences, but rather a regress. But while such criticism may be made, it is no doubt true that conceptions, which point in the direction of prayer for the dead, find at most obscure expression, and can hardly have represented a main stream of apostolic thought. Such a fact is quite natural. From any point of view the

question of prayer for the dead is a secondary question : the apostles were concerned to establish points far more fundamental. They were concerned, for example, to emphasize the blessedness of the faithful departed, as against any other view. Further, their thoughts were centred on the expectation of a great event to happen on earth, rather than on the processes which were taking place in another sphere.

The practice of prayers for the dead is based on its devotional value, and on belief in the general principle that we should find in prayer an expression of sympathy, and trust God to apply it where it is right. It seems best to pray, where sympathy suggests, rather than to enter on a jealous consideration as to whether this or that particular prayer is likely to be effective. The safeguard, and the best safeguard, lies in a clear and conscious recognition that all prayer must be subject to the clause "Thy will be done". Such is in the main the ground of Catholic thought, and is in itself a rational and sufficient basis. The belief in question finds confirmation, however, in our whole modern knowledge of personality. In the measure in which such knowledge advances, we have come to realize that personality does not change by jumps but is subject to development. We have come to see increasingly that even where there is the appearance of a sudden change, this change has been the work of a long, or relatively long, period of preparation. Unless personality in a future state is entirely different from personality now, as we know it, so much so as to invalidate every conception of a future state, then

we are bound to admit progressive development ; and if so, we have no ground for refraining from prayer for the departed. If it is right to hold that we cannot treat apostolic thought as exhaustive, consistency requires a freer recognition that we are not precluded from admitting the force of such considerations, because any corresponding practices are obscure or absent in that thought.

We are bound, however, to give full weight to any *positive* line of apostolic thought. We may not bring our thoughts, or our practice, into collision with the apostolic realization of the blessedness of the faithful departed ; and prayer for these must not suggest a condition of misery. It is sometimes urged, however, that such prayer, whatever its character, comes into collision with another positive doctrine which is fundamental in the New Testament—the doctrine that the faithful departed are asleep. It is very difficult to feel wholly patient with that argument. In the first place it represents only one element in New Testament teaching. The text “to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise” represents another. In the second place such an image of sleep might have a very real, and a very important, applicability, and yet be consistent with a real, even if perhaps an unconscious, development. If the image may be pressed such a view is not only possible but inevitable. Finally, it is urged that the Scriptures teach that as the tree falleth, so shall it lie ; that judgment is determined at death. How far that is true is a large question, and one with which we are not con-

cerned. Its truth is perfectly consistent with development towards a determined end, and so with prayer. Such prayer is no more unreasonable than is prayer for the living because we know that in the last analysis a man must be judged by his own achievement.

Many of the same general considerations apply to the further problem which is concerned with the prayers of the Saints. It is obvious, there again, that there is involved an extension of New Testament thought; but it is equally obvious that the objection to emphasis on the prayers of the Saints is conterminous, and must be conterminous, with the insistence that New Testament thought is exhaustive. If the latter view has to be given up, and if it should never have been accepted, then the objection to fuller recognition of the prayers of the Saints falls to the ground. It could be maintained only on two grounds: it may be urged in the first place that the Saints have not even that general knowledge or recollection of our condition which must be the basis both of their prayers and of our invocations. It is very difficult, however, to maintain that this view is supported by the New Testament. "There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-and-nine righteous persons which need no repentance." And even if the text: "Compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" has its principal significance if "witnesses" is interpreted as witnesses to the faith by their martyrdom, yet it does so strongly suggest a metaphor from the amphitheatre, as to seem to imply some such consciousness



as that with which we are concerned. A sounder objection is based on the fact that in the advance in the spiritual life, it is a very common, and possibly a characteristic, result that the practice of intercessory prayer passes away. But such a view, when employed to object to emphasis on the prayers of the Saints, involves a very narrow conception of prayer. Of course, if prayer is to be identified with explicit and particular petition, such an objection would have very real force ; but this identification carries its own condemnation.

In regard to the prayers of the Saints, as well as prayer for the dead, there is of course the further objection based on abuses. In the first place neglect has caused no less loss, in a general attitude which encourages men to think they have little concern with the dead. In the second place, here as elsewhere, it is obvious that the only sound treatment of practices, inherently right but open to abuse, lies in recognition and regulation. No other method can suffice to deal with a danger which is existent in respect of every doctrine ; and no other method avoids inevitable and dangerous reactions. It is sufficiently clear that current objections to such practices rest ultimately, not on these special pleas, but on their obscurity or absence in Apostolic Christianity. The view which I wish to emphasize, by illustration from these doctrines, is that we have no right to adopt a certain general conception of inspiration, a conception which has moved away from earlier and more mechanical thought ; and at the same time to retain



particular views, which have their real basis precisely in what we now see to be the limitations of that thought.

The problem to which I wish to turn next is that presented by Eucharistic theology ; and in this case less because of its value as an illustration than because of its practical importance, and of its direct concern with important truths. It is well at once to repudiate any medicinal, or miraculous, doctrine of the Sacraments. They do not involve a quantitative relation between grace received and the number of Communions made. In the second place, the best Sacramental doctrine is one not of "miracle" but of "effectual symbolism". It teaches that our Lord established rites which should typify His gifts of grace, and participation in which is, by His will, a normal condition of our participation in grace. It teaches, in short, that our Lord gave external form to the Christian life. What is implied may be stated more or less adequately as follows : our Lord wills, that all who are baptized are admitted to eternal life ; and that all who communicate, partake of eternal food. That statement needs, however, very careful explanation ; for confusion in regard to its meaning is as common as it is disastrous. In that statement eternal life has reference to a mode of existence, to a potentiality of life, rather than its actual realization. The gift is not of the eternal life, which is perfection ; but of the potentiality of that. Apart, however, from the gift of Christ, there is not even that potentiality. Such a gift, given, as we believe,

in Baptism, raises our potentialities, which constitute our mode of being, into a new order. In that sense it is very wonderfully a new birth ; but it is not to be conceived as a miraculous change of character. Further, the Catholic doctrine not only allows, but enjoins, the belief that this gift may be given otherwise than in baptism. We may venture to add that reverence and common sense alike require us to believe that it is so given. The point of traditional belief is first, that such a potentiality must be received as a gift from Christ ; secondly, that it is given in baptism ; and thirdly, that it is normally so given, that is that our Lord wills that, except in unusual circumstances, it should be so sought and obtained.

In regard to the other great Sacrament, the matter is similar. Our Lord's will determines, not that all who receive the Holy Gifts receive grace ; but that all who receive the Holy Gifts are enabled to receive grace, if they feed in their hearts with faith. The point again lies in the facts, first, that only by an act of our Lord's will does our faith bring such grace ; secondly, that He wills that, receiving Communion, we can obtain this grace by faith ; and thirdly, that it is His will that this grace should normally be so sought, and so obtained. Further comment is again necessary. Care must be taken to assert that our Lord may, and does, give power to appropriate grace by faith in cases where there is no Communion, either because there is no opportunity, or even because Communion is *bona fide* believed to be unnecessary.

It is a very common argument against insistence

on the Sacraments that those, who do so insist, have no reason to suppose that they obtain an experience of grace which is different in kind from the experience obtained by others. Two comments are necessary. In the first place, even if a man, who rejects the sacraments, receives the grace given in the sacraments, he is still without the full sacramental experience. He is still more without the right to deny that experience. The Catholic experience consists not merely in receiving grace, but in receiving grace in a particular manner. It is not a matter of indifference if grace can be received through external forms or corporate actions ; it involves the existence of a corporate and objective expression, on earth, of the spiritual life. In the second place, while Catholic thought is not concerned to deny the reception of grace by Christians who reject the sacraments, it does assert that such a result is abnormal, that it does not represent the process as in usual circumstances our Lord would have it. Not only would a Catholic fail to obtain grace, if he forsook communion ; but he is right to conceive it to be our Lord's will that grace should not be sought apart from communion.

Such a preface is necessary to guard against any misconception as to what I am going to say, which would lead you to suppose that the views, towards which our discussion will move, represent either a medicinal, or a magical, theory of sacramental grace. So far, a position has merely been indicated. In the next lecture I shall try to defend it.



LECTURE X.





## LECTURE X.

WE shall see reasons presently for holding that the New Testament view of the Eucharistic symbolism implies not merely didactic symbolism, but effectual symbolism ; that it is not merely a pictorial representation of the way of grace, but that it is ordained as the way of grace. If this is the New Testament view what is the authority of that fact? Can we regard such a view merely as a corruption of our Lord's teaching? Such a judgment is subjective, and must not contradict, as this does contradict, a wide tradition of saintly experience. We must seek to interpret our Lord's action, where interpretation is necessary, through the minds of those who best followed His example. Far too many, who may be so described, have testified to sacramental, and especially to Eucharistic, experience for us to regard contrary examples as evidence of more than the need of a true theology, which shall avoid materialistic conceptions, and of the undisputed fact that quietism has a place in Christianity. We are bound to deny any claim to invalidate sacramental experience, or to rate it lower. There may be some, and no doubt are some, who are called to seek God more especially in other and more individual ways. They have no right to deny that a large number of their fellows find Him in and through

these and other Christian ordinances : and only an exaggerated individualism can make them ignore such ordinances. If certain earthly rites normally mediate the grace of God, then the existence of these rites constitutes a presence of the Lord, and a presence which all are bound at least to recognize. In this particular question of Eucharistic thought, as also more generally, we must accept the view that the Apostles were truly inspired. We must accept it, not only as part of a general belief in Apostolic inspiration, but because in this particular question their doctrine is too largely supported by experience to be brushed aside as corruption.

It is open, on either the modernist or traditional view, to waive aside the further question as to how far this New Testament teaching can be traced directly to our Lord. Each of these views, as I have tried to indicate, holds that there was a continuation of the Incarnation in the Church ; and when the Apostles were inspired to speak the mind of Christ, we can rightly regard their words as His. But while this is so, it is well to note that only a bias in favour of the view that the Sacraments are at best a concession to weakness, can lead us to refrain from tracing sacramental teaching back to our Lord Himself. The growing emphasis on the eschatological elements in His teaching provides a background which makes His institution of the sacraments natural ; and, without entering in detail on critical questions, it may safely be said that the immediate and undisputed prevalence of the Eucharist requires the acceptance

of some such incident as that recorded in the narrative of the Last Supper.

That is fairly generally conceded, and difficulty is made, rather, over the command of repetition. Here again, the universal practice is a very strong argument. Whatever St. Paul may have done to emphasize the rite, it is hardly credible that he could have taught without foundation, yet without arousing obvious controversy, that such a rite existed—all the more incredible, because of anxiety for grounds of attack on his teaching. Nor is the absence of the command in St. Mark's Gospel strong evidence for the view that our Lord did not purpose continuance. If it were the case (and there are indications in favour of the view) that our Lord had taught the disciples to find in the solemn breaking of bread a religious rite, then what took place in the Last Supper was, not the institution of a rite, but the giving of a new meaning to a rite, to which the disciples had already been accustomed, and which they would naturally and properly continue. On such a view the purpose of continuance is independent of the command at the Last Supper ; and this command may have come to be inserted to make explicit a known purpose ; or, because the purpose was known independently, and the command would not have had the importance, which it must otherwise possess to the mind of the writer, it might have been omitted in St. Mark's record although actually given. But whatever view we adopt on the question as to how far sacramental teaching may be traced back to our Lord's word, the New

Testament doctrine must in any case be accepted as authoritative, for the reasons I have already given ; and we are simply concerned to seek to estimate what that doctrine must have been in the minds of the writers. For the sake of simplicity I shall frame the argument in terms of the view that the narratives of the institution do not greatly supplement a real incident. Probable as is that assumption, it is not essential to their authoritative character.

The first passages which we have to explain are of course the actual record of the Institution, and more especially the phrases : " this is My body," and " this is My blood," or " this cup is the new covenant in My blood ". For myself I have never been able to see any sufficient reason against the usual Protestant contention that these sayings may be parallel to such a saying as " I am the door " ; that they may be metaphorical in the sense in which that is metaphorical ; and yet the non-sacramental conclusion does not seem to me to follow. If the phrase " I am the door " be analysed, its significance lies in identification of the subject with the predicate, of our Lord with the door, because the subject has properties possessed, or suggested, by the predicate. If this be applied to the language of institution, it assigns to the Bread and the Cup properties suggested by our Lord's Body and Blood ; or more precisely, looking to such phrases as " given for you " and " poured out for you," by these as conceived as our sacrifice. It is to be remembered that the disciples were familiar with a sacrificial system ; and familiar with the ideas of participation in the bless-

ings of a sacrifice, and a covenant, inseparably from participation in the flesh of the victims. We are faced also by a context calculated to suggest Paschal associations. Either very dangerous language is used, language calculated to be gravely misleading, or it is meant that, in regard to consumption, the symbols, which our Lord is represented as giving, bore the relation to His sacrifice ordinarily assigned to the flesh of a victim in relation to its sacrifice : namely that consumption admitted to, and normally conditioned, participation in the blessings of the sacrifice, and of the covenant.

What is represented as our Lord's language was calculated to imply that the broken bread and cup bore the same relation to His sacrifice that the flesh of the victim was conceived as bearing to its sacrifice—a relation which in the minds of the disciples, was one of effectual, and not only didactic symbolism. We are wholly unjustified in assuming that our Lord is represented as using misleading language, and we must conclude in favour of effectual symbolism. It may be noted in passing that the bread and wine are thus called Body and Blood as effectual symbols of Christ, as our sacrifice ; not merely as symbols of His natural body and blood. This latter view is wholly unjustified by the language, or by its interpretation on such parallels as "I am the door". "I" is not a symbol of a door ; but rather the reverse.

I would urge that our Lord's words of institution must have implied to the writers of the Gospel that the reception of the symbol, which He gave, enabled



men to participate in His sacrifice. No doubt it is legitimate and necessary to say, as has been said, that actual appropriation of the blessing could only be secured by worthy reception ; for no doubt any pious or instructed Jew, or Gentile, believed that only worthy reception brought appropriation of the blessings of a sacrifice. This does not, however, affect the main point. Christ is not our food apart from His act : it is His to give such participation in Himself as our sacrifice. If the view advanced is correct, He did, and does, give it to those who receive the Eucharistic gifts, willing that He should be accessible to their faith to be their strength.

Such an interpretation, with its insistence on the function of faith, may appear at first sight to approximate to the view that the Eucharist is merely a memorial meal ; a view which conceives the Eucharist as serving to quicken faith, and so leading to an appropriation of Christ. May I, however, remind you of the prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas that we may receive not only the Sacrament but the substance and virtue of the Sacrament? There is a fundamental difference between the conception of the Eucharist as a memorial meal, and the view which I am putting before you. The former opinion substantially regards the effect as solely bound up with the subjective change which the rite produces, and with an emotional quickening which enables us to appropriate grace. If the view which I am advancing can be maintained, our Lord instituted a rite, and gave to the Bread and Cup in it a significance, in relation to His sacrifice,



parallel to that conceived as existing between the flesh of a victim and its sacrifice. There is implied that participation in the Bread and Cup is normally a condition of participation in the Christian covenant, in the blessings of our Lord's sacrifice, and in Him who is our sacrifice. Sacrificial conceptions, the imagery of which our Lord is represented as using, involved not only the idea that participation in the victim secured participation in the sacrifice, but that this participation in the victim was normally a condition of participation in the blessing. On such a view we have in the Eucharist not merely subjective, but objective conditionment.

We have also the language used by St. Paul other than in the account of the Institution. The phrases "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the Blood of Christ," "the bread which we break, etc.," are exactly such phrases as would be used by one holding the above conceptions. Further, the whole argument, which St. Paul based on the Eucharist, implies, or at least very strongly suggests, a belief in effectual and not merely in didactic symbolism. Finally, the phrase "not discerning the Lord's body," and the language about the awful effects of unworthy reception, points also to a belief in more than didactic symbolism. In themselves these texts suggest more, but that is far from all. Current conceptions of religious rites universally, or almost universally, attached to these effectual symbolism. St. Paul's words found a natural significance in consequence. If he meant their signifi-

cance to lie elsewhere, he guarded with incredible inadequacy against their being interpreted in light of these conceptions. As in the record of his Master's words so with St. Paul's, they were calculated to teach effectual symbolism to his hearers, and in consequence we have no warrant, consistent with historical honesty, for holding something else to have been meant.

There remains the problem presented by the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. The text "the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" has naturally and frequently been taken as implying that, in the Eucharist, we have merely a didactic symbolism. There is, however, a good deal to cause us to pause before we reach that conclusion. In the first place, whatever view we take of the fourth Gospel, we are bound to admit that in an exceptional degree it represents Christian reflection and meditation rather than a direct record. A good deal of the trouble in regard to this passage has arisen from the tendency to assume that it must necessarily be accepted as a literal record. Once we drop that assumption, we are bound to recognize that the whole passage may be a meditation on the Eucharist; and this fact is of importance in various directions. The text, to which reference has been made, has very close parallels in a certain line of Alexandrine thought; in a line of thought which spoke of "eating the Logos," and meant by that accepting His teaching. It is not inconceivable that this particular text may simply represent a reflex of some

such thought ; and, if that is the case, this particular text, taken in view of such an explanation, can hardly be set against the main tendencies of the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

There is a further difficulty in setting the fourth Gospel against these. Whatever be the history of this particular text, if it is taken in the Protestant sense, the passage as a whole becomes extraordinarily gratuitous and extraordinarily provocative. If our Lord was represented simply as leading up to the insistence that eternal life depended on the acceptance of His teaching ; then the language used, rather before this particular text, is difficult to explain, and difficult to justify. We are left with a sense of incongruity between this particular text and the passage as a whole. It is not necessary for the success of our argument that we should be able to bring this particular passage in line with a far more general, and far more positive, tendency of New Testament teaching ; or that we should be able to bring this passage entirely into line with itself : but I may mention two suggestions which have that object. In the first place, the incongruity would be explained by the theory that the writer believed that "eating the Flesh" meant "receiving the doctrine," but that he was thus glossing some earlier teaching, which was too authoritative to be omitted altogether, and which is to be traced in the earlier verses. In the second place there is an explanation, substantially identical with that adopted by Dr. Gore, which removes any incongruity. It is, to say the least, very possible

that the phrase, "The words that I have spoken" refers to the discourse just recorded, and not to our Lord's teaching in general. Give to the phrases in that discourse their most obvious meaning for any writer, or reader, familiar with the Eucharist. Regard the text, "the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world," as a reference to the Eucharist; and the language about the necessity of eating the flesh of Christ and drinking His blood as insistence on the importance of the realities of which the Eucharist is the sacrament. The text, "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life," becomes an assertion that this teaching is spiritual and life-giving. The opposition is not between the Jews' materialistic misunderstanding of "eating the flesh" and a final interpretation as acceptance of our Lord's ministry; but between the literalistic misunderstanding and the sacramental explanation which must have occurred, and which was meant to occur, to any Christian who read the passage. Such an interpretation has much to commend it; but whatever view be taken of it, or of similar attempts, the more important passages are those in the Synoptics, and in the Epistle to the Corinthians. The evidence of these makes it in any case certain that the symbolism of the Eucharist must be regarded as effectual symbolism.

I propose next to indicate reasons for believing that the Eucharist is a sacrificial rite; but I wish to make clear at once that I am not concerned for the moment to discuss the problem usually associated with that phrase—the question of the relation of the Eucharistic

sacrifice to Calvary. That is a question which requires separate treatment ; and indeed it is largely a separate question. A sacrifice, regarded in light of the comparative study of religion, is perhaps best defined as the solemn setting apart or consecration of certain objects, as a religious rite. Frequently, but not invariably, the objects are capable of consumption, and the solemn setting apart or consecration is made with the intention of giving special significance, or special effect, to this subsequent consumption in the completion of the rite. We are concerned for the moment simply with the question as to whether the Eucharist comes under this definition. The importance of this question, and the reason why I have introduced it at this point, will emerge presently and cannot well be anticipated.

It is obvious, in the light of what has been said, that if the Eucharist is a sacrifice in this sense, the effect of the solemn setting apart of the bread and wine is that, receiving them worthily, we participate in the sacrifice of Calvary. It does not, however, follow directly, from what has been said, that the Eucharist is a sacrifice in the above sense. It is possible to hold that there is effectual symbolism ; but that this depends, not on consuming particular objects but on eating and drinking together in a memorial meal.

The distinction between the two views may be made clear by examples. If the latter view is correct, the practice in the Church of England in regard to reconsecration, when either species fails, is both un-



necessary and superstitious. On the same hypothesis, certain religious bodies, in which each person has a separate cup and separate bread, and these are never blessed and broken by the minister, have yet valid Eucharists. On the same hypothesis the Patristic and Catholic practice of sending the Holy Gifts from the Altar to the sick, and of communicating from the Reserved Sacrament, are not capable, or not certainly capable, of giving valid Communion. The difference between the two views lies in the nature assigned to the symbolism. Is it symbolism of object, or of action? The traditional view requires us to hold the former. It implies that certain objects are given certain significance as possible objects for consumption, but antecedently to consumption; and that the significance of consumption is drawn from this antecedent significance of the objects. The alternative view is that the action of consumption has directly symbolic significance; and the objects have no significance in particular, or only a derived significance in the actual act. This distinction affects the rationale of the rite, and is not merely verbal.

General considerations of propriety and the record of the Scriptures point to the accuracy of the traditional view. As regards the general considerations of propriety, it is obvious that the symbolism of the Eucharist represents better the fact that Christ is given, or gives Himself, to be our food, and that we do not merely take Him apart from His act, if the symbolism is of object, and so of action, rather than directly of action. If the symbolism is of object, but only if it is



of object, is the fact expressed that Christ is not merely taken, but is given to be taken. As regards the evidence from the Scriptures, the record of the Institution is well-nigh conclusive in favour of the view that the act of reception took its significance from significance given antecedently to possible objects of reception. "Take, eat : this is My body," the similar phrase as to the Cup, and the whole account of the actions, serve to make this sufficiently clear. Further, the sacrificial associations, and the meaning of the words of institution in favour of which I have argued above, are clearly most in line with the significance being for the reception of some particular food, which, as it were, took the place of a sacrificial victim. St. Paul's phrases : "the bread which we break is it not," etc., "the cup which we bless," etc., and his parallel, without any special argument, to pagan sacrificial banquets, alike point to his regarding the significance of consumption as due to an antecedent significance, given to possible objects of consumption in and by their setting apart in the Christian assembly. The point can, of course, be developed, but it seems sufficiently obvious from what has been said.

The position so far reached is that our Lord instituted an effectual symbolism, that this was of object, rather than directly of action ; and that in consequence the Eucharist is a sacrificial rite, in the above very wide sense.



LECTURE XI.



## LECTURE XI.

WE pass to three highly controversial points : the nature of the Eucharistic Gifts, the doctrine of the Real Presence, and the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. We have seen that in the Eucharistic Bread and Cup we have a case of effectual symbolism ; and the whole view we have considered treats of the *modus* of the Eucharist, not as in any way a miraculous process, but as a case of the creation of objects to be effectual symbols, a process familiar in merely human affairs. I wish to urge that there is a vital difference between the significance of the Eucharistic symbolism, and that of such merely human symbolism ; but this lies, not in the *modus operandi*, in the nature of what is done, but in the Divine character of the will which determines the symbolism in question.

As has been said, we are familiar with merely human examples of effectual symbolism. It is possible to illustrate this by an example, which at any rate has some relation to actual practice. A king takes bread and salt, and says : " Whoever eats this bread and salt, thus acknowledging me, will be treated as my friend ". Now the effect is that, in a certain very limited sense, the bread and salt acquire a property ; namely, that their deliberate consumption results in the king's friendship. We have, however, to

emphasize the qualification, "in a very limited sense". The relation between action and effect of action is clearly less ultimate in regard to the king's friendship, than it is in regard to a natural property of the objects, such as the fact that they nourish. That which determines that the result follows the action in regard to the king's friendship is merely the mutable will of a human being, and also of a being who may be ignorant of the action. The sequence between action and effect, when the effect is the outcome of a natural property, is determined by natural law; that is, in the ultimate analysis, by the Divine Will.

In the case, however, of the Eucharistic symbols the Divine Will determines the sequence between the relevant action of Communion and the resulting ability to secure full union with Christ and the blessings of His Sacrifice. That follows immediately from any form of traditional Christology. It is in accordance even with the conception of a diffused incarnation. It follows that, however different the mode of this will, the ultimate *nexus* between action and effect is identical with that which determines those sequences which constitute natural properties. In consequence, the potentiality of effect constituted by the bread and wine becoming Eucharistic has the same ultimacy of basis and necessity which exists for natural potentialities; and in consequence, no less than these, it is describable as a property of the object.

An object is for us primarily a realized complex of properties, or potentialities of effect, some of which are physical: and if a new potentiality is acquired, which



is of the same ultimacy, and so as truly a property as the old, we can hardly fail to think of the object as changed. Indeed, if we are to be true to our Christian philosophy, we must so think, or else we adopt a materialism which regards natural law as having another basis than the Divine Will.

Two objections will immediately occur to you. It might be necessary to distinguish between the Eucharistic and the natural properties because of the difference between spiritual and physical effects, or because of the function of faith in determining the result of communion. The latter ground, taken by itself, is, however, obviously inadequate. Both spiritual and natural nourishment involve an active assimilation: the sole difference is that in the former case there is usually involved a *conscious* effort. The true issue, underlying both objections, is whether our spiritual and our natural lives are really separable. Obviously the regenerate life is something more than the natural life, but what we have to decide is whether the spiritual is inclusive, or separate. The latter alternative is unsatisfactory from the point of view of both philosophy and theology. It represents a conception which will not bear thinking out, and implies an ultimate dualism which Christian theology has steadily rejected. Nor is this all. What is at issue is a refusal to separate our spiritual experience from our natural experience; a refusal to make a dichotomy which I would urge has no basis in experience and militates against the fullness of the experience which it seeks to honour.

The difference between the outlook on experience,

which declines to make such a dichotomy, and the outlook which insists on that dichotomy, extends far beyond the Eucharistic problem, although there it is most acute. Let me take a single, and extreme, illustration outside the field of sacramental practice. Objects acquire sacred associations. Are they to be accounted hallowed, and is such association to be encouraged? If that process has its own great dangers, religious experience seems to prove that its method has a sound foundation, for quite certainly it is peculiarly effective in facilitating such experience. To come a step nearer to the special problem of the Eucharist ; a flower becomes a symbol of love, is sent as such by a man to a woman ; is she wrong to count it as having become in some sense more than a mere flower? It contradicts instinct and experience to say so. Yet the whole position I am advancing is involved in the soundness of her tendency. If such is in any degree correct, when the symbolism is merely human ; then, when the symbolism is based in the Divine Will, when it is such that the object has a new potentiality as ultimate as the old, there can be little doubt that we must hold that object changed indeed.

The whole argument may appear also open to criticism on the ground that it treats an object as no more than a complex of potentialities. Even if every object is more than this, if the properties in a large measure, and at any rate the existence of the complex as such, depend on some specific and underlying reality, the conclusion is not affected. The complex, which we describe as bread or wine,

exists ; and after consecration continues to exist in the natural order in virtue of the same reality. On the other hand, the enlarged complex, which exists in the consecrated gifts, is, in virtue of the equal ultimacy of the Eucharistic and other properties, a true complex. In the natural order there is no change. For the regenerate life, and so in the higher but inclusive order, there is change. An object emerges which is dependent on, and gives expression to, the one eternal Sacrifice.

It is worth restating more explicitly the results of such a view. It is necessary to regard the Eucharistic gifts as more than bread and wine ; for otherwise there is a tendency either to deny the Eucharistic property, or else to deny that its ultimacy is no less than that of natural properties. If both these facts be properly apprehended, then, since an object is primarily a complex of potentialities of effect, some physical, the Eucharistic objects are changed ; not by change in the physical effects or potentialities, but by change in the complex by the addition of other properties of an equal order of ultimacy. It is not denied that the Eucharistic gifts are bread and wine, in the sense that they have all the qualities of bread and wine ; but language must be preferred which emphasises that they have other properties, no less ultimate and far more significant. In short, objects so related to our Lord as our sacrifice, that by faithful communion on them we participate in Him, are best described as He described them, as His Body and Blood : not as asserting any material identity between these objects

and His natural body and blood, but as asserting their nature and relation to Him.

What I have said leads up of course to the problem of the Real Presence. It may save misunderstanding, and the usual and sometimes justifiable charge of asserting a real absence, elsewhere than in the Sacrament, if I begin by some indication as to what can legitimately be meant by the phrase "Real Presence". Christ is, of course, present or operative everywhere as God: further, as God and Man, He is accessible, or present, to every Christian, spiritually; that is, at any moment and in any place. Such presence is, however, not a Real Presence in the sense in which this phrase may be used to describe the Eucharistic Presence. Such a Presence is no less valid, no less intimate, no less true, and, in the ordinary sense of the word, no less real than the Eucharistic Presence; but it is not objective, in the sense of coming into, and depending on, the external objective order in which we live. By an objective order I mean, for purposes of this discussion, an order involving objects, and (in that sense) a physical order. Independence of this objective physical order constituted the value of the more general Presence of our Lord. On the other hand, if His relation to us in any way finds expression in the objective order, then there would be constituted something more, which would be what we call a Real Presence. Such would exist in any case in which Christ's accessibility is mediated by, and normally dependent on, the physical order in which we live.

This occurs in two ways. In the first place, Christ is so present to us in His mystical body, the Church. We are taught, and we know, that in ourselves acts of Christian love are more truly described as wrought by Christ in us, rather than wrought by us. When we are the objects of such acts, Christ is acting towards us through His members; and this possibility of action exists in virtue of the presence on earth of these members, that is, it exists in virtue of the presence of the Church on earth. On such a view our Lord is objectively, or "really," present on earth through His mystical body; present as our Friend, even as our Judge and Saviour. It is also claimed that He is "really" present otherwise. In the next part of our discussion I shall try to advance reasons for saying that He is present in the Eucharist as our Sacrifice. But for the moment we may leave this distinction of different real, or objective, presences in different aspects; merely noting that what is involved is that which the imagery of the Book of Revelation represents as the heavenly worship, that our Lord is present diversely according to His diverse aspects.

For the moment I am concerned to discuss the real, or objective, presence through the Blessed Sacrament. We mean by a Real Presence, as I have said, an accessibility which involves the physical order, and which depends on physical objects. Now we have seen that the Eucharistic gifts are not adequately regarded as bread and wine; that they have acquired what is properly described as a new and wonderful property, that of which we have



spoken ; that in consequence we have to regard them as objects, since they have still physical properties ; but as changed from their original character of mere bread and wine. In the Holy Gifts we have objects, receiving which with faith we are united to Christ. The possibility of such objects is constituted in and through our Lord's being and nature. They are in consequence an objective expression of His being. They are so by the operation of the Divine Will ; and so, by a nexus no less ultimate than that which, in the form of natural law, gave rise to His natural body. It may be added that the Eucharistic Gifts mediate a far more intimate relation with our Lord, than did His natural body to His first Disciples.

It follows that if the Presence of His natural Body would be objective occasion for adoration of Him, so even more is the presence of the sacramental objects. The phrase "objective occasion for worship" is deliberately chosen, for it evades language which suggests adoration of the objects. Was our Lord's natural or "glorified" Body present, we should not worship it. So also with the Sacrament. In each case, however, we do rightly find, in the presence of the object, occasion and call for worship of Him ; and because of the relation of the object to Him, our external act is related to the object. We kneel toward, or bow toward, the object, in our worship of the Person. It is therefore just as fair, and no fairer, to charge such a practice in regard to the Blessed Sacrament with worship of the object, as to bring a similar charge against those represented in the Gospels



as kneeling before our Lord, or against those represented in "The Book of the Revelation" as kneeling before the Lamb.

The third great controversial problem in Eucharistic theology is that of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and more particularly of the relation of the Eucharist to our Lord's one all-sufficient sacrifice. I have already urged that the Eucharist is a sacrifice in the very general sense which is suggested by the comparative study of sacrificial religions. It is not, of course, a sacrifice in the sense in which most Old Testament sacrifices were so; and in which, as we are told, further sacrifices became unnecessary on Calvary,—the sense of giving objects to God as a ransom, usually through the killing of a sacrificial victim. The Bread and Wine in the Eucharist are consecrated for God's purpose, rather than given to Him. On the other hand, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in relation to Calvary, the Eucharist has a tremendous significance.

The history of sacrifice is the history of the religious instinct groping after deep truths with much failure, and with much lapse into what can only be termed superstition; yet so continually coming back to the same ideas, as to imply the determining guidance of experience. In all sacrificial religions two necessities seem to have been felt; and the evolution of a sacrificial system appears to have represented very largely a striving to give effect to these. Man seems to have been impelled to the convictions first, that salvation could only come by dedication and, in

the face of sin, through suffering and death ; secondly, that corporate acknowledgment of this was required for the appropriation of salvation. As a result, we have very commonly not only the sacrifice of a victim, but the appropriation of the benefit, sought in a sacrificial meal. In all sacrificial rites of this description, for the sacrifice to be the sacrifice of the people, it must not only be offered for them, but must be capable of appropriation, and must be appropriated by them, in some corporate manner. The Christian Eucharist would seem to meet the second of these necessities, or rather whatever deep truth lies behind this necessity. For Christ to be truly our Sacrifice, permanently and for all time, it was necessary that He should have been a sufficient Offering ; that He should have given Himself to God ; that this should, in face of sin, involve suffering ; and, we may perhaps add, that for didactic, if for no other reasons, it was also necessary that such suffering should end in death, and should find that formal expression which was secured on Calvary. There was, however, the further necessity, if Christ was to be our Sacrifice, that He should be acknowledgable, and appropriable, as such, in a religious rite. The Sacrifice of Calvary was complete, final, perfect ; but only because the Eucharist had been instituted, by which our Lord had made Himself acknowledgable, and appropriable, as our Sacrifice.

Viewed generically, the Eucharist is a Sacrifice, in which bread and wine are set apart as a religious rite and so, in the ordinary language, become an oblation ;

but much more is involved in this. Precisely in so becoming an oblation, the bread and wine become related, in the way we have seen earlier, to our Lord's Sacrifice, to Him as our Sacrifice. They become His Body and Blood, in the sense that those who worthily partake can appropriate Him, who is our Sacrifice. The Eucharistic Gifts become the one acceptable, and accepted, Sacrifice in the sense of becoming the necessary objective expression of that Sacrifice. They become so through the Divine Will; and are therefore no less truly or ultimately so, than was Christ's natural Body on the Cross. We have in the Eucharist what is only in one sense a sacrifice, when viewed by itself; but something which, when viewed thus in relation to Calvary, is a rite in which the oblation becomes the one all-perfect and sufficient Oblation. Just as it was our Lord Himself, and not His natural Body and Blood, which was the true sacrifice on Calvary, and yet by a natural and proper method of speech we identify that Body and Blood with the Sacrifice; so no less legitimately we identify with it the Eucharistic Gifts, for these are, and are no less ultimately, an objective expression of our Lord's being. Sacrifices in the old sense have passed away; but now that we are less concerned to distinguish sharply between the Christian rite and the Pagan or Jewish sacrifice, there seems more than sufficient ground for use of sacrificial language in regard to the Eucharist.

It is necessary, in view of the current controversy, to say something as to the sense in which our Lord

can be said to be offered in the Mass. The most vital need is to make it absolutely clear that the phrase must be used with a meaning which is somewhat unusual and exceptional. Christ was once offered in the sense of being given and dedicated to God, and once accepted. The Eucharistic Oblation, Christ our Sacrifice, is not an acceptable but an accepted Sacrifice. As such He cannot be further given and dedicated. But the fact that the oblation is not only all-sufficient, but accepted, is the glory of the Holy Eucharist. In the past, and in other religions in the present, men sought and seek to seal their whole system of worship and prayer, and to obtain individual help, through some particular sacrificial rite. They reckoned and reckon as adequate, oblations which are merely typical. Since Christ has given us in the Eucharist an oblation which relates us to His Sacrifice, in the same way in which those oblations were conceived as relating to other sacrifices, we have a rite in which there is realized, and fulfilled, all of which others dreamed or dream. Christ is given to the faithful to be their Food, as being their Sacrifice; and as a result not only are they fed on Him, but their corporate worship, and particular prayers, are sealed and sanctified. The Bread and Wine, consecrated in this Christian Sacrifice, become the one, all-sufficient Oblation. Apart from emphasis on this, if we merely consider the individual benefit of Communion, we fail to do justice to what is involved in the Scriptural identification of the Eucharistic oblation with Christ's Sacrifice. Contemporary sacrificial con-

ceptions never contemplated individual benefit, apart from the sanctification of the whole system of corporate worship and of Israel as a whole ; and we have no shadow of ground for narrowing the significance of the Eucharist.

One technical point remains : again current controversy prevents reference to it being entirely omitted. In certain schools of theology there is a tendency to treat the Eucharist as primarily an act of intercession ; to make the immediate function, or purpose, precatory or propitiatory. It is difficult not to feel that such a view, both has no sufficient ground in Scripture, and contradicts Scripture. It is inconceivable that, if the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews held such a view, his argument would not have taken a different turn. The truth seems to lie in the view that the primary nature, or intention, or purpose of the Eucharist is commemorative and an act of thanksgiving ; but just because this is so, and because such is our bounden duty, the effect is propitiatory. We have, by God's mercy, only to acknowledge Christ as our Saviour, and to give thanks in the manner He has appointed.

In conclusion may I remind you that such a treatment of the Eucharist makes no claim to perfection. On the other hand it represents an attempt to bring practices of proved value within a theory less open to objection ; and this must be the goal of our thought, unless our earlier discussion was wholly mistaken. Until that goal is reached we can only go on with the best theory available, recognizing its inadequacy, or else we must deny experience. Amid much corrup-



tion an objective conception of the Eucharist has best fed the religious life ; for materialism has been less destructive of Christian devotion, than has the inevitable reaction. Some objective conception must be the aim of theory ; equally so some conception which is in no sense magical or materialistic.



LECTURE XII.



## LECTURE XII.

I HAVE spoken of the Eucharist before discussing the Church, because Eucharistic theology provides a crucial example of the problem of the relation between our spiritual experience and our natural experience, between our regenerate life and our natural life. I have urged the view that a solution of the Eucharistic problem lies not so much in exegesis, in the question as to what is the fundamental meaning of such an expression as "This is my Body"; but in the significance which a general view of experience gives to that meaning. The refusal to make a dichotomy between our spiritual and natural experience represents an attitude which is so much more effective, in regard to experience, as to imply its substantial correctness. It is however, a refusal which represents a choice not as between opinions on one particular question, but as between two different theological systems; and so much is this the case that any discussion of the Church is greatly simplified, if it is subsequent to that decision. On the other hand I cannot express with sufficient strength my desire to avoid any suggestion that the Eucharistic Presence, and the Eucharistic Gift, are either separable from, or not directly dependent on, the presence of our Lord in the Church. If in the Blessed Sacrament our Lord is present as our Sacrifice, it is

as a result of His more general presence in His mystical Body.

There remain very real problems in the claims of institutional Christianity. Obviously any acceptance of such views as I have put before you in preceding lectures, suggests that the institutional element in religion, and in Christianity, is of great importance. I wish now to emphasize that conclusion, and to try to evaluate its practical result, especially for English Christians. It follows immediately from any insistence on the value of tradition, as a summary of the facts of religious experience, that the large and possibly exaggerated stress, which religious tradition lays on the institutional element, implies the helpfulness of this factor. And I have already indicated a slightly different ground for the same conclusion. History shows that religious movements commence in general with a spontaneous period, which often displays, in a greater or less degree, abnormal gifts or *charismata*; it makes, however, no less clear that, if such movements persist, they do so in an ecclesiastical form. Catastrophic outbursts of spiritual forces give place to institutions in the history of every religion. Save for the fact that the charismatic period showed marked institutional elements, and the later institutional period recurrent *charismata*, Christianity is no exception. We have clearly, as a possible theory, the view that the change to ecclesiastical conditions is a necessary adjustment. The more pessimistic view, that such a change is a corruption, is challenged by the facts of religious experience. Corruption exists, but the his-

tory of every "revival" makes clear that in corruption ecclesiastical conditions have no monopoly ; and they have proved markedly capable of producing personal holiness and personal religion. And as I have indicated, not only do Saints arise in ecclesiastical conditions as well as in charismatic ; institutional religion has alone secured effects which, if less striking, are widespread and continued. We appear bound to conclude that charismatic conditions are merely earlier, and not higher, than ecclesiastical. Here, as elsewhere, we have reason to distrust a view which sees the working of God only in what is unusual or catastrophic.

The importance of the institutional element in religion may be urged for another reason, but one which partly explains the value it has had in securing persistence. Since religious thought is necessarily social, the mutual contact, provided by institutional unity, is an almost necessary condition of healthy theology. We are familiar with the effects of self-justification in giving an evil bias to theology, and with resulting tendencies to exaggerate grounds of difference, and to ignore other and often complementary experience. Jealous criticism in the East and by ourselves of Roman theology and practice ; Roman tendencies to exaggerate, and harden, all that is most peculiar to their system and most exclusive ; the development of Wesleyanism into separation from the Church of England, and the subsequent history of its attitude to that Church ; Anglican contempt for nonconformity ; and the multiplication, until recently, of the grounds

of difference between the Free Church of Scotland and the Established, are obvious examples of the consequences of failure to treat institutional unity as vitally important. Separation has not merely resulted, but has been accepted as tolerable ; and independence, and antagonism, of thought have hindered the proper development of theology.

Nor is the lesson of history merely negative. Few things are more striking in mediaeval Western Christianity, whatever its faults, than the degree in which institutional unity was regarded as fundamental, with the result that new movements appeared but stayed within the Church. Finding embodiment not in sects but in religious orders, they gave of their best to the whole body. In the present century we are again witnesses of the impulse towards unity of thought, which is resulting from a new realization of the need for an external union. The changing relations of the two great Presbyterian Churches of Scotland ; the effect which the Tractarian movement has wrought in the Church of England, precisely because no sect was founded ; the bearing, which missionary experience of the need of unity, has had on the growth of a better temper in theological discussion, are all facts which challenge attention, and give pause to that blasphemy against the growth of a Christian spirit, which bids us welcome a " healthy competition " and acclaim in the spiritual sphere principles which we have learnt to distrust in the secular. Synthesis in theology, together with the temper of mind necessary for this, and necessary no less to Christian charity,



have proved inseparable from a strong sense of the supreme importance of external unity. Nor is the conclusion vitiated, because an enforced unity is as harmful as separation.

Insistence on the institutional element in religion is a part of the whole treatment of religion, advanced by those writers, whose general method I have adopted, if not always their conclusions. It was not reached, and could hardly have been attained, so long as Christianity was looked at, not as concrete experience, but as a system behind which must be sought something with special appeal to nineteenth century thought. In that period the *a priori* method was dominant, men sought to think out what should be true, and to insist that it was so. Even apart from the general inadequacy of this method, its bias was in favour of simplicity, and so against any relation of personal religion to institutional. The concomitant tendency of thought to individualism had a further and more powerful effect in the same direction; and in religion itself, as existent in Great Britain, the absence of general experience of Catholic worship made easy, and almost inevitable, ignorance of what that experience can be. Further, with institutional religion were bound up ill-proved and even superstitious assumptions; and the temper of the age, concerned primarily to remove these, failed to consider whether practices might not be better grounded than their popular explanations. It was small wonder if institutions were felt unimportant, and institutional religion ignored; so that any bounden allegiance

became meaningless, and the sermon became the criterion, by which to test competing Churches.

This result was the more assured, until recently, because the full blast of the present conflict of thought had not made itself felt. First men felt, and could feel, that, if the nation was split into sects, there was a general acceptance of the Christian Gospel, at least by those religiously minded. Later that if dogmatic and supernatural Christianity was threatened, its opponents were convinced supporters, and often very striking examples, of Christian morality. Now much is changed, and many who gladly united in rejecting a view which seemed alarmist and pessimistic, have come to fear its truth. Christian Ethics are now scarcely less widely attacked, than was Supernatural Christianity two generations ago. Now as then men of great honesty, and striking personality, share in the attack. We have been forced to face a sharper issue, and it is easy to see that the character of such protagonists may be evidence for little more than the truism that only men of great worth and sincerity lead successfully movements which are new, and on the whole unpopular. With the gain from such a recognition has come a very real loss. Morality is best learnt by participation in a corporate tradition and life; and in view of its social character this is peculiarly true of Christian morality. Now that many seriously minded men reject Christian ideals, the national life is less capable of supplying such a tradition, and the importance of the corporate life of religious bodies is proportionately increased. What is true of morality

is true also, in a greater degree, of personal religion of the Christian type ; and the recognition of these facts requires, and has produced, a considerable change of attitude to institutional religion. Modern tendencies in psychology have helped to encourage such a change. On the one hand it is becoming clear that for many their religious experience is closely bound up with a corporate life ; and with a corporate life must enter institutions. On the other hand the educative value of the senses is becoming very generally recognized, in religion as elsewhere. If Christianity seeks to convey the knowledge that it is truly a mystery, but a mystery here in the world, and fails to give this visible expression in institutions, forms and ceremonies ; then it is sacrificing what psychology knows to be a most valuable element in education, as well as attempting something foreign to the Christian tradition.

For many reasons, it is in fact coming to be recognized that the old attempt to depreciate institutionalism must be abandoned. Probably it is practical considerations which are most effectual ; but such other reasons, as I have advanced, have effect in supplying a background for the change. At any rate, in quarters where institutionalism was generally decried, the change is evident. There is a tendency to abandon the older doctrine, in favour of the stronger position that, although institutions and forms are valuable and necessary, no particular institutions and no particular forms have an exclusive claim, while in practice many are marred by a false sacerdotalism. Such a position, or the further statements with which

it is usually associated, lends itself to immediate criticism in various directions. In the first place, precisely in the measure in which forms have an educational value, they cannot be wholly indifferent. They must at least be suited to indicate a true view of their significance. Both in connexion with the eschatological prophecies, and in relation to the Eucharist, I have tried to indicate the value of the conception that the Church is the "Mystical Body" of our Lord ; and I pointed out that this doctrine was adopted, in the first instance, as the only adequate explanation of Christian experience. If such a view be correct, we have to give expression to it. However humble its members are bound to be, the Church has a divine dignity, and a dignity which should have external expression.

Until the Church is perfect in the perfection of all its members, there is no final resting-place ; for only so is the Body completely dominated by the Spirit of Christ, and the triumph His : but the Body of Christ it is even when partially paralysed, and grievously diseased, by the sins of its members. The Church, on such a view, rightly represents itself, and rightly claims recognition, as Divine. The humility of Christians must be for themselves and for the condition of the Christian Church, not for its nature. The hierarchy is bound, not to minimize the dignity of their representative function, but to such a temper as will secure a jealous and reverent hesitation, lest they do in the name of the Lord otherwise than in accordance with His certain will. For the visible Church, and for its

representative officials no less than for individuals, there remains the stern lesson of the Parable of the Talents. Perfection must be sought, not in denying calling, but in its proper exercise.

An obvious objection may be urged on the grounds that the Church's power, and manifest triumph in the world, have waxed and waned, and when its triumph has been greatest, it has not always been the case that the Church so represented the Spirit of our Lord as to make that triumph most truly His. Success was too often secured by force and conceded on far lower grounds. But if, when truly governed by the spirit of Christ, the Church is to have a *manifest* triumph, which shall be His; we are bound both to regard its visible character as vital, and to claim that it has a transcendent nature and dignity. Perfection, and a visible triumph, have still to be realized in any adequate form, and vary in remoteness. If Christianity be true, a final triumph was secured when there had come the Pentecostal outpouring, and when this had achieved a permanent vehicle in an institutional Church. Christ's visible triumph is already real; and it is capable of completion, precisely in virtue of a visible Church, which is His Body, because its members are His members, because its existence was the outcome of the Incarnation, and because at bottom its vitality has depended not on its faults but on the fruits of the Spirit.

No real possibility exists of maintaining the contention that fulfilment of the prophecies lies in a Church Invisible. That idea fails to supply an element of



visibility required for any triumph, which gives adequate meaning to the imagery. Such considerations imply an exalted conception of the significance of the Church, as it actually has existed, and now exists. There follows, as a necessary corollary, that its actual embodiment should express this significance, and so a conclusion in favour of the Catholic instead of the Protestant conception of institutional religion. The safeguards against inevitable tendencies to a wrong sacerdotalism must be sought in the careful and critical development of the former view, rather than by adhesion to the latter.

As against the view which welcomes a diversity of religious societies, we have also to remember that an important argument for institutional religion lies in its value in bringing together different minds. Such a result is defeated in the measure in which separation takes place ; and we have in consequence one of the most valuable functions of institutional religion dependent on external unity. This consideration is largely responsible for an extreme reaction against the view that all Christian institutions are indifferent ; and probably we can best reach a conclusion as to the limits of indifference, and the place of sacerdotalism, by discussing that reaction. I have, of course, in mind the Modernist argument for Roman Catholicism. Marking as large a movement from Cardinal Newman's position as did the *Essay on the Development of Doctrine* from the official apologetic, it not only treats dogma as developing, but its content as primarily empirical. On that basis it is urged that Roman



Catholicism is the widest tradition of corporate Christian experience, and of spiritual culture ; that in consequence more than any other Christian community the Roman Church is capable of mediating that experience to the individual, and of integrating fresh experience and thought in the corporate tradition. Further it possesses in a unique degree the advantages of historic continuity, universality, and dignified and expressive ceremonial ; while considerations, somewhat similar to those advanced in earlier lectures, may be used to justify, *in globo*, Roman Doctrine—which justification, it is urged, is all that can, or need, be demanded. It is clear that such an argument is very impressive ; the more so, because it embodies a position reached, not in controversy with Protestants, but in a search for sure foundations against attacks on Christianity. Such a position, it may well be claimed, represents not a decision in favour of Roman apologetic, but a setting aside of superficial controversy and criticism, in the interest of a unity and continuity which are doubly important in face of the attacks on Christianity as a whole. And yet when used to defend the view that communion with Rome is universally, or almost universally, a Christian duty, such a view is open to criticism which is not merely serious but fatal.

The whole argument which I have advanced as to Authority led to the conclusion that an enforced unity is destructive of any rational authority for doctrine. This consideration is applicable, not only if unity is enforced by persecution, but also if it is determined by

a sense of the absolute necessity of union with Rome. If authority consists in a voluntary, and wide, consensus as to doctrine, then there is the gravest difficulty in accepting an absolute necessity of unity with any see ; and this difficulty is enhanced in the case of the Papacy, as it now exists, on lines I have already indicated. Nor is the objection only of such a general character. The general validity, which may be claimed for Catholic doctrine, supplies an argument in favour of submission to Rome, which is more impressive on first sight, than conclusive upon further examination. The general body of doctrine, of which an *in globo* justification exists, came to the present ultramontane Roman Church in substance as an heritage. In consequence, its general accuracy has not the same weight in an argument about the intrinsic character of that body, which it would have, if due to the original apprehension of that body. Further, where Roman theology after the Schism with the East is most in advance of the common tradition, it is least capable of such justification ; and this fact has obvious significance.

The doctrines of indulgences, of purgatory (in the popular Roman form), of the immaculate conception, of the corporeal assumption of our Lady, and of a monarchical and infallible papacy, are those most concerned. While any sound apprehension, that Christians are members one with another, involves the conclusion that in the conquest of one all are strengthened, the doctrine of the treasury of merit in relation to indulgences shows an obvious influence of

a desire to cover a current practice, and a practice the growth of which is traceable by historians, and is of a very doubtful character. All questions concerned with the life after death are precisely of the type in which the main considerations, advanced in previous lectures, give least justification for any claim that our beliefs can be more than most general in character, and highly tentative. The assertions embodied in the two doctrines which concern the Blessed Virgin had their growth, and their acceptance, official and semi-official, in a temper of thought too confident of its power to make such statements without historical confirmation; and seem hardly likely to survive freely in another atmosphere. They had their origin in an exaggerated belief in the miraculous which casts suspicion on their authenticity; and their value in conserving our Lady's unique position may well prove to be bound up with that attitude.

Without anticipating what has to be said later about the Papal claims, it may be noted that the Modernist writers are the first to condemn an ultramontane conception. Since, however, their general appeal is to *actualities*, and to the value of Roman Catholicism as *actually* found, we are justified in pointing out that, when they deal with this question, it is by way of asserting that the actual ultramontane Roman Catholicism is not the real Roman Catholicism, but overlays it. They tend to ignore that actual encouragement of healthy thought should be part of such a pragmatic test as they seek to apply; and that the failure in actuality of their ideal Roman Catholicism

constitutes a real flaw in their argument. It can be overcome only by the clear assertion that such encouragement is a subordinate consideration to other values—a conclusion arguable, but very far from valid. Nor is there any reason to regard ultramontaniam as accidental or exotic. Cardinal Newman's arguments can be used quite fairly to identify with Vaticanism the whole Roman system.

In consequence of what has been said, the argument which may be used for the Roman obedience, must be limited to the assertion, that of those bodies which did not throw away much of the heritage of Catholic experience, the Roman Churches alone show real vitality. Such a statement ignores, or minimizes, the significance of the Russian Church, counting its faults but not its almost unique virtues. Even if such a view was conceded, it would only supply an inadequate argument. If no inference were to be drawn from the unfortunate character of peculiarly Roman doctrine, and above all from the impossibility of the Roman conception of authority, proof is required that the vitality of Rome cannot be accounted for by those accidents of race, geography, history and civilization which favoured her as against the Orthodox communities, and which supply a *prima facie* explanation. Without that proof, the argument, while emphasizing the value of unity with Rome, gives this no such absolute basis as would make submission an undeniable duty. It becomes a matter of the advantage to the individual and the community. It is probable that, for example, Russians who join the

Roman obedience do more harm than good to themselves and to Christianity. Even did they gain by participation in a better tradition, it is at the expense of local isolation, and of contact, too often, with a great bitterness of temper. If they serve to widen that tradition it is at the expense of increasing the estrangement of Russian Orthodoxy, and postponing corporate union. The vitality of Rome may well be an argument, not for individual submission, but for greater effort on both sides for corporate reunion, that Orthodoxy may receive help, and that Roman Catholicism may give it. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"—if this text be applied, it suggested a ministry of assistance rather than a right of supremacy; and gives little encouragement for failure to assist, even were legitimate claims denied. It implies patience and forgiveness rather than anathemas.

The Modernist argument fails to allow for the significant weakness of peculiarly Roman doctrines. It fails to recognize that the Roman Communion is specifically differentiated by a conception of doctrinal authority, which it admits to be bad. Finally its appeal to practical advantage takes no real account of local conditions. Such are, however, not the only objections. The Christian Church is regarded too superficially, from a standpoint which is merely utilitarian. In this, and in the next lecture, I shall try to develop grounds for such a criticism, which cut across any ultramontane conception, modernist as well as traditional.



It is commonly asserted that our Lord founded a society ; but we are far closer to our authorities if we insist primarily on the birth of a new race. Men did not merely join in a spiritual movement, they changed not merely their purpose of life and ideals, but also the possibilities of their nature. No doctrine is more integral in Catholic thought than this conception, that Christianity brings an enlargement of the possibilities of life ; and, if we are to base discussion on such a general acceptance of Catholic doctrine as I have tried to indicate, our discussion must accept that view. If regeneration is regarded as a reality, the fundamental Christian fact is men regenerate, not the institutional expression of their common life, necessary as that is. It is easy to minimize unduly the degree in which that life had from the first an institutional expression ; and, further, full allowance must be made for the increase in the relative importance of the institutional element. All this, however, may be claimed in regard to national life. Yet, unless we ignore the whole lesson of political history since the Middle Ages, and unless we hold mistaken the whole tendency of political thought, we cannot treat the institutional element as fundamental to national identity. There is nothing in the argument, so far considered, which leads to another conclusion in regard to the Church, if this finds its best analogue in a nation. The Hierarchy, and even the Papacy, may be sacramental of continuity and order ; but, if this is so, the claim is no greater than may be made in the case of a secular state.



When the American colonies separated from the home country, the divorce involved in a high degree a sacrifice of continuity and unity, precisely because of the political separation, the abandonment of the English Crown and Parliament. Few historians however will be found to deny that the change was an inevitable step in evolution; and still fewer political thinkers would presume to assert that the English Crown did not cease to provide the only natural "obedience" for a man of the English race. Whether we regard the separation of the American colonies as wise or unwise, we could hardly presume to suggest that a citizen of the United States is guilty of disloyalty.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. The value of institutions, in preserving continuity and unity, is very great indeed. In any particular case, it supplies an argument of immense strength against the wisdom of separation. Yet unless the whole tendency of thought in such matters, a tendency which has substituted actualities for ideal conceptions, is wholly wrong, any claim on the ground of continuity and unity is an argument against the wisdom of separation, but not in itself against the legitimacy of an alternative allegiance, when once separation has taken place. So far as an adequate analogy for Christian institutions is found in national life, the argument from unity and continuity has no claim to be stressed further; and it may be noted that the analogy employed meets in its own way the emotional revolt from a divided Christendom. If it is sound, then unlike somewhat

crude biological comparisons, it holds out hope of reunion. History shows not only disintegration, but reintegration. At the beginning of the twentieth century, we have obvious examples.

It is argued, as against such a view, that the Body of Christ must be one, and that in consequence the Church must be a single society. At bottom such an argument fails, through the fallacy I have already indicated, in that it regards the Church as the Body of Christ otherwise than as the outcome of the fact that individuals are His members. Because their life in Him is corporate and must have expression, it results that His members must not merely be a totality, but must be a complex, and visibly a complex, even if a complex in which some members are dead or diseased. On the other hand, just because the visible unity of the Church is the outcome of this unity of life, the question as to whether the outcome is fully realized at any particular point is a question of the degree of perfection of Christians, and not an immediate result of the existence on earth of Christ's mystical Body. It will be noticed that such a view leads to a conception of Christian unity, which makes it evidential of the truth of Christianity, and in such a respect it corresponds to the great high-priestly prayer, in the fourth Gospel, far better than do more mechanical conceptions.

Before I pass on, I ought to make it clearer that this unity of the Church is essentially more than the unity of a nation. It is true that it is a unity which is the outcome of the life of the individuals ; but we

have to emphasize the fact that this life is corporate. If we are to think in social analogies, then it is true that a nation provides a far better analogy than a society ; but this results precisely from the fact that there is a common life in a nation, which necessarily issues in a corporate embodiment. The analogy of the nation is good, precisely because it approximates in some degree to an organic conception ; the least inadequate analogy lies in the unity secured by the different cells of an organism.



LECTURE XIII.





### LECTURE XIII.

THERE is a further criticism of the adequacy of the analogy of the Church to a nation. Although less important in itself, it implies a departure from the conceptions of secular politics. It claims that, in the case of the Church, the nature of the government is not merely an accident, and that its moral authority is not only drawn from functions which it serves.

If we consider the attempts to claim an absolute value for forms of secular government, we find that these almost always issue in an assertion that the government in question has some transcendent source. History affords examples in the tendency to deify rulers, or to claim for them divine descent, or at least a divine commission. Modern thought has rejected all such claims, and has concluded that, real as is the moral authority of government, it is based simply on its ministerial character, on the fact that it does perform a necessary and important function. It is held, as a result, that the question of this authority does not depend on the particular form of government, or the particular government ; but simply in the last resort on the fact that general allegiance is secured. It is to be noted, however, that this conclusion arises from the denial that any transcendent source can be legitimately

claimed ; on the denial, that is, of all the particular claims advanced. It is not in question whether, if such were true, the deduction might not follow that a unique authority would exist, giving an exceptional character to the government in question.

An obvious, although, of course, an imperfect analogy, makes clear that a difference is involved. In the case of a royal, or vice-regal, government, the government is not merely the mechanism of order and unity, but is the symbol of a personal sovereignty. Revolt would set at naught not merely the value of the government in preserving unity and order, but allegiance. If a new government was established which fully conserved order and unity, that allegiance would be sacrificed. Even if the new government professed loyalty, and sought to carry out the royal wishes, an important change has taken place. The new government recognizes but does not express the supremacy of the Crown ; and has brushed aside a government which did the latter. On the old basis, the state represented an assertion of sovereignty, and its recognition : on the new basis, the state represents the latter but not the former.

Now the functions of a government include the expression of the principles on which the state exists ; its activities are not more important in their practical effect, than is the influence of its claims and nature. That is why on democratic principles no particular government can be allowed to claim an essential character ; and it is a strong reason in favour of the view that even the most benevolent of despotisms is

inconsistent with such principles. On the other hand, if an absolute inherent sovereignty did exist, it is also implied that this should find some such expression as is secured in a superimposed government, or in one which has a direct sanction from the Crown and regards this as essential. Without such a character the government is at least as inadequate, as is, in other conditions, a benevolent despotism. It scarcely needs reiteration that the whole conception of an absolute personal sovereignty is inapplicable in any secular state, or to any secular government. If, however, the Kingdom of Heaven is to find expression, it follows that its government must partake of this character : that it must express not merely our allegiance to God, but a claim on this allegiance. Such a view finds satisfaction in the Church if, but only if, the government of the Church has a direct and divine sanction ; if, but only if, it was in some real sense definitely established by our Lord. Otherwise, a Christian society represents an aspiration after the Kingdom ; it is not an expression of the Kingdom.

What has been said supplies a warning against the superficial application to the Christian Church of secular analogies, or the tendencies of political thought. If the analogy of the secular state is to be completely applicable, it must be because the Christian Church is at most only an aspiration after the Kingdom. The Church becomes an adequate expression of the Kingdom if, but only if, our Lord instituted an authoritative ministry ; and if a ministry now existent is in any

special sense its present embodiment. In that case, while the application of the secular analogy will still be valid, and its implications reliable as against any other criticism, there is the important limitation that a special respect for such a ministry is a real obligation.

Such a conclusion requires the Apostles to have received from our Lord an authoritative ministry. Not only is its bestowal asserted in the Gospels, but its exercise is displayed in the Acts and the Epistles. Even if St. Paul claims to have been created an Apostle in an exceptional and miraculous manner, it is a definite and authoritative ministry which he claims to share. It is, of course, arguable, and it has, of course, been urged, that all such conceptions, alike in substance and in form, were inserted into our Lord's mouth as the result of later development. The argument turns, however, on a strong conviction that such teaching was improbable. Once Apostolic inspiration is substantially conceded, clear Apostolic practice in matters of principle very probably attest the Divine Will ; and their exercise of the ministry of authority creates a strong presumption of its accordance with the mind of Christ. Such a view of the Divine Will cuts away the ground of the attempts to minimize the evidence for this element in the earthly teaching of our Lord. The Apostles' immediate, general and unquestioned exercise of peculiar authority strongly suggests a foundation in our Lord's earthly teaching, and makes inevitable the conclusion that the First Gospel does no more than make explicit some element which was really present. The tendency to accept eschatological

teaching as genuine, supplies a background which makes such an element natural.

Even if the authoritative character of the Apostles' ministry be conceded, it may be argued that the authority they received was of a special and a transitory character ; or that no ministry persisted which gave it permanent expression. It is, of course, true that the Apostles' ministry was a ministry of foundation ; but it was not exclusively so. The record of the manner, and character, of its exercise forces the conclusion that it went beyond a ministry of foundation, such as Protestant missionaries would exercise. It is not only authoritative, but the authority claimed is expressed in the assertion of a gift of the power of binding and loosing. It is represented as involving an executive and judicial function, based not merely on fuller knowledge, and consent, but on a divine commission. The whole picture in the Acts and the Epistles reflects the same view. It represents a ministry, which asserted the supremacy of Christ by ruling in His name, as well as by spreading His Gospel. On the other hand, when we pass to the question of continuance, the unique element in the Apostolic ministry is apt to be minimized in precisely the opposite interest. That unique element serves to explain, and to justify, the fact that the Apostolate as such was not perpetuated ; and vitiates the conclusion that a ministry of governance thereby ceased. At the Apostles' death a local ministry had emerged, or was emerging ; and it is clear that, if this was not always by their express direction, there must have



taken place a general extension of, and adjustment to, what the Apostles enjoined. It follows that the ministry, to which their death made over the Church, possessed, or secured, the substantial sanction of their authority.

The crucial question is as to the effect of this transition. I wish to urge that such a doubtful answer as sub-apostolic history can provide, is less important than is sometimes supposed. Put the matter in its most extreme form. Suppose the ministry which thus arose was not only on a basis which was largely congregational in form, but that it was purely congregational; it would still have a significance which goes beyond that which is inherent in such a ministry—a significance possessed in virtue of its continuity with, and sanction from, the Apostolic government. I have urged that it is essential, for any realization of the Kingdom, that the ministry should be in some sense superimposed; but such a sense is obviously fulfilled, if you are dealing with a ministry, set up or approved by the original ministry, and in that sense simply a development of the original government as such. And because what is essential is that there should be a real continuity between the government at any instant, and the original government (a continuity dependent on a continuous sanction), it follows that when the government we have supposed had changed into the three-fold ministry, without breach of continuity or consent, the latter in turn assumed that significance. Subsequently, any violent change, even the restoration of an earlier form of government, would fail to preserve



the continuity which gives the significance in question. Any resulting government would have lost a characteristic feature, and an essential feature, of the Christian ministry.

This conclusion would be disputable, if the Apostles could be conceived as concerned, not merely to embody government in some convenient form, but to establish, as a fundamental principle, democratic government. Such a view is, of course, a hopeless anachronism. If, but only if, a government possessed a transcendent significance in the first instance, that significance is possessed by a government which preserves continuity. Change must come in a constitutional manner, for revolt implies, in theory and in temper, that the only significance of a government is in the last resort that of popular consent. We are concerned, not with any supposed divine institution of a particular mode of government ; but with the divine institution of a concrete government in some form, and an obligation to whatever government preserves historical continuity with that which was originally instituted. If such exists, respect for that government is involved in our recognition of the original commission, and of legitimate authority to give that commission.

I am, of course, bound to note certain important objections to such a view. It may be urged that because God is all wise and all loving, if the Church's government misuses its power, it might, and should, be set aside. The conclusion, true as it is within certain limits, must, however, be confined to the asser-

tion that such government may legitimately be set aside only in the measure in which power is misused, and only so long as it is misused. Such deprivation for faults cannot involve more than the minimum of interference with the government. For example, if in any district bishops were so deposed, there would not be justified a failure to seek, as far as and whenever possible, fresh episcopal consecrations when once ecclesiastical authority had become characteristically vested in those episcopally consecrated. It is urged again that God is our Father, rather than our Lord, and that we have the freedom of children, and need not consider formal symbols of Christ's incarnate authority. It must be replied that, while a fuller conception of God is mediated by the idea of Father than by the idea of Lord, the former idea may not be used to exclude the latter, as is too commonly the case in current writings.

A further, and more plausible, objection can be advanced on the following lines. It may be pointed out that, along a similar line of argument to that adopted over the institution of the Eucharist, I could reach the conclusion that Apostolic assumption of authority, in accordance with the guidance of the Spirit, would be no less significant than a commission in our Lord's *earthly* teaching. So far I would be inclined to agree; but the point of the attack lies in the further argument that later spontaneous ministries can be equally justified by such a view. There I join issue. If the Apostles assumed authority it was in virtue of their close connexion with our Lord. Such a basis is necessary;

for the government should express not merely the supremacy of Christ, but that the historic Jesus was Christ. It does so, if, but only if, we regard as essential a ministry continuous with one, the authority of which depended on its relation to Jesus of Nazareth. Even apart from a direct commission the historic ministry would possess a unique, and sufficient, authority. But, as I have urged, it is difficult to deny some direct basis in our Lord's teaching.

It will be seen that the position advanced is a substantial admission of the doctrine of Apostolic succession. This rests on far broader grounds than the degree in which that succession was at first always mediated by a personal commission, conferred in the laying on of hands ; or the degree, in which the ministry was, from the first, in the particular form of moniscopacy. Again, it is independent of any question as to how far the ministry could at first be exercised in virtue of special *charismata*, or in virtue of a special and divine commission. That such exercise existed, in some degree, is certain ; that it was not uncommon, is probable. The fact, however, remains that, when it did so, it was with general consent of the current authority ; and at a period before a charismatic basis for government had been rendered out of date, by the institutional character which the Church properly acquired. It is difficult to find cases where both these conditions do not hold ; but either is sufficient to vitiate any true parallel to later spontaneous ministries. The historic episcopate, and an episcopally ordained ministry, is, as a matter of history,

the sole organ of Church government which has evolved, with continuous sanction, from the Apostolic government. Such a conclusion is conceded by Dr. Harnack, as fully as it is claimed by writers of a different school. It follows, on such a view as I have tried to put before you, that the historic episcopate is the present embodiment of a government established by Christ to govern in His name ; and acceptance of it becomes a consequence of belief in the Incarnation, and of belief that the Scriptures do not misrepresent the ministry of the Apostles. The claim of the historic ministry becomes a witness, and a necessary witness, to such belief. Our religion is from heaven, not of men, and brought into being by the Incarnation : its institutional expression embodies those facts.

The question naturally arises as to the conclusion such a view indicates in regard to bodies without the historic ministry. For the present we may be content to note two considerations. In the first place, the position above advanced involves the conclusion that a ministry without episcopal ordination is an inadequate substitute for the historic hierarchy. Further, if it is held that the Eucharist has its significance not merely as a commemoration, but as a commemoration which is the corporate act of the New Israel as such, then there is involved in this, that it ought to be performed with the co-operation of legitimate authority. Indeed historically such authority was largely concerned with the regulation of the Eucharist. It follows that other Eucharists are irregular. We have no ground of reason, and we have the strongest contrary ground

in experience, in regard to the conclusion that such other Eucharists are invalid in the sense that they fail to mediate grace, or to do so objectively. On the other hand, they do so, not by the normal operation of the divine purpose, but by its operation in face of what appear to be improper conditions and inadequate conceptions. In consequence, such Eucharists do appear to be invalid, in the sense that they do not form part of the normal expression of the divine purpose.

Whatever development of the threefold ministry took place, it has been generally held that any priest, episcopally consecrated, could validly celebrate ; and, as a result, further development does not raise any question which might prejudice the validity of Eucharists so celebrated. On the other hand, it is of course possible to claim that such further development brings an obligation of allegiance to the papacy, or patriarchates ; and it is important to consider how far this is implied by the argument used in this lecture. Before I do so, may I make one general remark applicable both to the discussion of the episcopate and to that on which we have now to enter. In dealing with general conceptions arguments have a fundamental character. The transcendent nature and historic origin of the Church present such conceptions ; but, in the evaluation of their significance, we have to deal with a very complicated situation, which is due far more to history than to difference on first principles. The discussion becomes less broadly based ; and, for certain types of mind, there results a sense of irritation and distrust. We have every



reason to realize that a situation which demands such discussion is a false situation ; but it is wholly illogical to distrust a discussion because, in dealing with so complex a problem, it has to follow a narrow course, seeking to avoid first one excess and then another. The discussion inevitably possesses such a character : its validity must be judged by the validity of its argument.

It would involve an extension of this lecture, which time does not permit, if any attempt were to be made to consider whether the growth of the power of the patriarchal sees represented an essential transference of authority, or one which was superficial. The balance of probability seems, on broad grounds of actuality, in favour of the former view ; but with an important qualification. It is difficult not to feel that the transference of authority to the patriarchal sees was to these sees as being important, and as pillars of orthodoxy. The problem arises as to how far such transference is permanently binding, in the event of change in either respect. Any question arising from the loss of importance, is one which concerns primarily the Eastern Church ; and to that Church it may be left. In the West there can be no doubt that the importance of the Roman See has remained. Its orthodoxy is more open to question, on lines already indicated. To take only the truth of its conception of doctrinal authority ; if the views advanced in preceding lectures can be maintained, then it is not possible to avoid the conclusion that Rome has gravely erred. If the transference of authority to the Roman See were to it as being



both great and orthodox (and much history supports such a view, especially in the case in question), then it is by no means clear that such transference might not be held to have lapsed through signal error on a point now of crucial importance.

Altogether apart from any view which so limits the permanent effect of such a transference of authority, the Roman claims cannot well be maintained. Were the matter merely one of a patriarchate, and a limited primacy, or concerned simply with the principles already advanced, a patriarchal authority, and even a primacy, would be indisputable. The question is, however, by no means so simple. The Roman claim developed from that of a primacy among the patriarchates, into that of a monarchic papacy; and in various directions such a claim, when based on development, lends itself to serious criticism.

In the first place the essence of the argument for the three-fold ministry lay in the broad continuity of the development. The monarchy claimed by the Papacy, and in virtue of which authority is exercised, is universal; and such a universal monarchy could only find a basis in development, were it the outcome and expression of a general development of the organized Church as a whole. It is just here that substantiation is impossible. Anything like an actualized and general transference of power by the Eastern Church and Hierarchy, such as to give the Roman See a universal monarchy, is definitely absent. Making every allowance for the concession of a primacy, for other causes of schism, and for the

measure in which a considerable authority was freely transferred or delegated, the broad fact remains that the claim of the Holy See to a *monarchic* position was a main cause of the schism between East and West. Nor was such a monarchic position once definitely secured and then overthrown. As the monarchic claim grew, so did friction; and such growth and such friction resulted in repudiation and schism. The later concessions by the Orthodox representatives at the Council of Florence neither secured the consent of the Eastern Churches at the time, nor gave rise in any degree to an actual development in the direction of a universal supremacy of the Roman See. The Roman See developed into the Papacy; but the Government of the Church never, as a whole, developed into a monarchy. The latter development is required for the Roman conclusion.

It is sometimes argued that, even if the development of Church government provides no basis for a universal monarchy, it justifies the claim that the Roman See possesses a legitimate monarchy in Western Christendom. It is suggested, in short, that, whatever be the case of the Orthodox Eastern Churches, any Western Church is bound to concede the fullest supremacy to the Holy See. Such an argument limits the Roman claim to the assertion that, within the Western patriarchate, a transference of power took place which conferred on Rome a local but absolute authority. The argument provides an obviously inadequate basis for the modern Papacy. This cannot be accepted apart from belief in a *universal*

monarchy ; both because recognition of this is officially required, and because so final an authority would alone justify the Papacy's attitude to canon law, and its independent additions to the body of *de fide* doctrine. The Papal claim would not, however, become legitimate, on the view I have advanced, even if it were so limited as to correspond to the argument in question. If Church government is inherently not merely a matter of local convenience, it is not merely a matter for local determination. It could only become so through a final sanction by the Church's government as a whole. Setting aside for the moment any inherent right of the Papacy—if its claim is to be based on the transference and concentration of authority—a local transference is not a legitimate development, if it goes so far as to destroy the general character of local government established by Church authority as a whole. A monarchic Papacy marks so different a conception to that generally conceded in regard to patriarchates, that it must be held to come under such a criticism. The same consideration, it may be noted, makes untenable any deduction that, with the consent of the local bishops, a local Church could dispense with episcopal ordination as a condition of an authoritative ministry.

Neither this nor any argument I have used implies that the Church as a whole could not, for example, become Presbyterian. If that is impossible, it would have to be because episcopal government resulted, or survived, not through secular analogies, but as embodying some vital principle. Whether that is the

case, I am not prepared to argue. In present conditions it has no practical importance : the argument against actual Presbyterianism rests on the absence of such a development. On the other hand it is worth while pointing out that, even had the present monarchic papacy secured universal consent, its claims would now be unsound. The papacy came more and more to assert not only that the Church was assisted by inspiration in regard to doctrine, but that the ultimate authority for doctrine was charismatic rather than rational ; it claimed an essential share in the mediation of, and more and more it has claimed itself to mediate, such an infallible *charisma*. Exercising its executive functions in reliance on more than rational authority, and weakening this by forcing agreement, the position claimed is bound up, and is admittedly bound up, with the propriety of such a charismatic view. If that view is incorrect full executive authority could not properly be conceded, so long as it would be exercised on such a basis. The point lies not merely in error, but in such error as directly affects the exercise of the powers claimed. The argument is independent of that used earlier, which was based on this, and other, error ; but was valid only on the view that the Roman See received its authority as being pre-eminently orthodox as well as important.

## LECTURE XIV.





## LECTURE XIV.

So far the claim of the Papacy has been considered simply in regard to an argument from development, and without reference to the argument from Scripture. The latter argument cannot be ignored, even although it is, somewhat obviously, an inadequate basis. It may be that the position which St. Peter received was to a certain extent personal, and one which should not find a permanent reflection in the Church on earth. It has to be remembered in this connexion that the Apostles' ministry of foundation was in some degree unique, and Christian instinct has always given to them, and especially to St. Peter, a special position in the Church triumphant. On the other hand if St. Peter exercised a real supremacy, in the administration of the Apostolic Church, strong grounds are required for a refusal to recognize the principle of a supremacy, as a proper feature in Church government in later periods.

The Scriptural picture of St. Peter's part in the Church, points to a real primacy and to a unique position ; it does not, however, support the view of a supremacy. Anti-Roman controversialists are apt to challenge the major premise of a primacy, when they would be better employed in urging that the primacy was not monarchical. One of the Petrine texts has

already been noted. The threefold command to feed the faithful, especially in light of the triple denial, is of a similar character ; and while it *possibly* suggests a unique position, or primacy, in no degree requires the view that there was involved a supremacy. The narration that the gift of the power of binding and loosing, which was later made more generally, was first made to St. Peter, certainly carries us no farther.

The passages, which supply a more serious argument, are the "*Tu es Petrus*" and the gift of the keys. Theological study has, however, passed beyond the stage when it was capable of supposing that our Lord spoke to future generations otherwise than by teaching His immediate disciples. We may find by the reflection of ages a greater profundity in some of His sayings than they realized. We may be able, in light of Christian experience and fuller knowledge, to piece together truths beyond the language and conceptions available for His use, and employed by Him. We are none the less wholly without the right to suppose that, in such a matter as establishing a primacy or supremacy, He failed to convey His meaning to the Apostles. In such a matter evidence of our Lord's purpose, or teaching, must be sought not in isolated texts but in the general character of Apostolic practice and belief. Roman arguments seldom prove more hopeless than when, seeking evidence of a supremacy and not merely a primacy, we study their treatment of the Acts and the Epistles. Not only is such evidence absent, but a supremacy is inconsistent with the picture presented.

As a result, if the "*Tu es Petrus*," and the text as to

the gift of the keys, necessarily implied the institution of an ecclesiastical supremacy, we should be bound to assume that they must represent at least a gloss on our Lord's actual language, and a gloss which, taken by itself, was illegitimate. Nor is it possible to argue simply from the presence of such texts in a canonical gospel, and apart from critical consideration of their origin. I have suggested that the pictures presented in the four gospels, or rather our synthesis of these pictures, is more illuminating than any critical reconstruction. Such a view does not, however, imply the finality of isolated texts. There may well have been, even in Gospel times, not only an ecclesiastical party, but a party for Petrine supremacy; and both tendencies may have found reflection in the First Gospel. The final canonical position of that Gospel only guarantees at most that the inclusion of such elements are valuable to the general presentation. In regard to the general ecclesiastical authority of the Apostles, the Matthæan teaching and the general picture of Apostolic practice correspond. In the case of the Petrine texts there is a real collision, if these imply a supremacy. The only possible conclusion would be that, while they give expression to St. Peter's having received a primacy, they exaggerate this into a supremacy, and on that point are unreliable.

It is, however, by no means clear that these texts necessarily imply an ecclesiastical supremacy. Both are metaphorical, and, in consequence, neither can be pressed as against any views which give them a real

significance. The "*Tu es Petrus*" is adequately met by St. Peter's part as first making the crucial admission, and by his leadership in the foundation of the Church. The text as to the donation of the keys presents a difficulty more apparent than real even if, as is very possible, it implies a stewardship. We know little of the position of stewards in contemporary Jewish households, but it is probable that they had a real authority over all servants. On the one hand metaphorical language cannot be pressed to the full limits of its implications; and a primacy, with its resulting influence and position, sufficiently justifies the comparison. There is a further point of considerable importance. The definite correspondence of a steward's position to a supremacy, rather than a primacy, turns on the master's mind being either undiscoverable, or expressed through the steward. The former alternative is, admittedly, an inadequate view. As with the argument from development, so with the argument from the Scriptures, Papal supremacy is therefore bound up with Papal infallibility, or at least with some very special *charisma*. If our Lord's mind does not find expression in that manner, the Scriptural argument for the Papal supremacy is invalid: and that even when we allow a metaphor to be pressed unreasonably, and when we have set aside the illegitimate nature of an argument from a single text, and the impossibility of a conclusion in contradiction to the more general picture.

It will appear to some that I have considered at undue length the Papal claims: to others, that I have

dealt too briefly with Roman arguments. Endorsement of many of the premises, which in practice, if not in theory, lead to adhesion to the Roman Communion, made it necessary to deal with the case for that obedience. On the other hand acceptance of the Roman claim involves the acceptance of a particular conception of doctrine and doctrinal authority. It is not only that particular arguments for the Roman obedience repeatedly presuppose this conception. The Roman Church, and system, are differentiated *essentially*, not by acceptance of particular experience, nor by readiness to encourage such acceptance, but by an oracular conception of doctrine and authority. In the earlier lectures I tried to develop another view of theology. If the conclusions of that discussion are substantially correct, the Papal system is necessarily wrong, and particular Roman arguments present only subordinate problems.

The ground has been cleared for the consideration of the Anglican claim ; and the strength of this lies precisely in a fact which is too often advanced by way of criticism. In an age of ecclesiastical chaos Anglican theology claims no finality, and the Anglican Church no exclusive title. It asserts that the Roman, and any exclusive Eastern, claims are invalid ; but the assertion has not been made the basis for a claim as extreme as those condemned. Finding immediate occasion for separation from the Papacy in the Papal failure to meet adequately the revolt, religious as well as political, from the mediaeval tradition ; and especially in the refusal to acknowledge the unique authority



of Scripture, and the weaknesses of the current theology; the Anglican Church was anathematized by Rome, and its separation was perpetuated. Not only has this resulted because the religious values of Protestantism are still unsynthesized in Rome as it actually is, but also because union became inseparable from acknowledging the complete finality of dogma, the monarchic character of the Papacy, and the exclusive claim of the Roman Church. The Anglican Church stands for the assertion that Catholicism finds neither an adequate intellectual basis, nor a wholly valid expression, in the Church of Rome. It claims no completeness in itself, and not necessarily the greatest freedom from imperfection, but rather that no Church possesses such completeness. The Anglican's loyalty to his Church is, at its highest, dictated by no blindness to her defects or failures; but by the fact that she is the concrete assertion that Catholicism finds at present no adequate embodiment. Almost the most hopeful element in the Anglican position is that it involves the admission, and assertion, that ecclesiastical government has gone astray—a view on which alone can the present state of Christendom be fairly faced without doubting Christianity. Its unique claim consists in its existence as a large racial Church, which combines such an admission with a preservation of the historic government in so far as, in the West, this can still claim an authoritative character. And, within that Church, theological thought, however imperfect, is free almost to excess; and able to build up, in contact with Catholic experience, a scientific theology.



As has been said, this Church, which has preserved the historic episcopate, but is prepared to acknowledge chaos when chaos is self-evident, is no mere exotic, nor even some small local body. It is probable that the Provinces of Canterbury and York were never merely two provinces in Western Christendom ; probably they had always a greater self-consciousness as a unity than most other national groups. However far that may be the case, and it is at least as certain that it is usually exaggerated, the centuries since the Reformation have done their work. There has been an inevitable rise of a clear individual self-consciousness ; and the Anglican Church has spread with the English race, and grown in importance with that race. The Anglican Church stands, now, an entity in Christendom, considerable in size, and important out of all proportion to its size. Forced into self-consciousness ; it has become an entity, as separate from the Roman as is the Eastern Church. Reunion with Rome will come when at last in God's Providence the time is ripe, and the way made possible by the work of the Spirit in removing the immense faults on both sides. When it does come, neither common sense, nor the analogy of the Eastern Church, admits the view that the identity of the Anglican Church will pass out of existence. In final union such a fact must be met and allowed for ; the mediaeval situation cannot be restored. The difference which now exists is not only a matter of breach of communion, and departure from proper belief and practice on either side. These are its disastrous features, but besides these

there is independence of history and independence of development. In this connexion a further point may be noted. The Anglican Church is evolving, and has largely evolved, what is a patriarchate in all but name. The title of honour is not for us to give ; but the propriety of such a development, and its final recognition, are favoured both by the relation of Canterbury to a racial Church, and by the secular importance of that race.

Such is the Anglican claim. Apart from points with which I have already dealt, it is attacked on three grounds. The Anglican Church is accused of fatal heresy, its bishops are said to be without jurisdiction, and its ministers without valid orders. The first of these attacks has already been dealt with both by implication, and directly. The conclusions reached need not now be recapitulated. With a sufficient justification they give also much cause for humility and effort. The second attack seeks to apply to an abnormal situation rules drawn from normal conditions ; and in a lapse of patriarchal authority, considerations which presuppose that authority. Anglican jurisdiction has its basis in the fact that the existent external authority in Western Christendom had become invalid ; and loyalty to legitimate Christian government demanded no more than preservation of Episcopal succession. The attack on the validity of Anglican orders calls for slightly longer attention. The most damaging reply would not consist in the criticism of the present form of that attack, but in a bare narrative of the manner in which that attack has had

continually to shift its ground. It is, however, necessary to deal with the present official criticism ; and, with the reply to that, we may well be content.

It is urged, in substance, that even if the Edwardine ordinal might conceivably be a valid ordinal in itself, the deliberate omission of the word priest from the technical form, and of any reference to the *potestas offerendi* made clear a purpose, or intention, of not ordaining the traditional ministry. Three replies may be made. In the first place, even supposing the Anglican reformers had intended to deny the essence of the *potestas offerendi*, their broad assertion of a desire to continue the traditional ministry was a sufficient safeguard of the validity of their ordinations. Even if we accepted the narrow scholastic definition of the "form," in ordination, we are clearly justified in going outside the "form," when it is attacked on the ground of its history. The English reformers may, or may not, have properly conceived the function of the historic ministry ; they may, or may not, have been justified in hesitating to apply to it the term Priesthood with its current associations ; but they certainly proposed to continue the historic ministry. Such is made clear both by their explicit statements on the point, and by their continued use on many occasions of the familiar, if to their minds doubtful, title. Further, the whole character of the Ordinal and even the "form" provided, make clear that they purposed to ordain such ministers as our Lord ordained. Unless the Priesthood is a sum of powers, rather than an organ in a body, the implied denial of a power, however characteristic, cannot be

set against a perfectly clear identification of the organ, by reference to history and to our Lord's institution. Secondly, there is a consideration which is emphasized by a Cambridge writer, the warden of St. Anselm's House, in an article, on Anglican Orders, in the Prayer Book Dictionary. Argument from even a clear purpose to do otherwise than the Church is only evidence of defective intention, as creating a presumption that the intention is other than that of our Lord. Holding, rightly or wrongly, that current conceptions of the priesthood were not what our Lord intended, the Reformers took the one course which safeguarded what they did, when, instead of particularizing their own view of the ministry, they identified their purpose directly with His by falling back on what they conceived to be the "form" of His ordinations. In the third place, the whole claim that the Reformers did not purpose to continue the *potestas offerendi* is based on an illegitimate view of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It would be tenable if, and only if, the verbal oblation was of the *esse* of the Holy Sacrifice; if, and only if, it was more than the explication of what is done in consecration. The Reformers may have been in error as to the significance of consecration; but if that is the essential sacrificial act, then it was made clear by their Liturgy that this function was bestowed on those ordained to what they still termed the Priesthood.

While such attacks leave the Anglican position unshaken, they have, however, much to teach those of us who feel bound to accept that Communion. It is

not merely that we owe to charity a duty to make our orders not only valid, but, if occasion offers, of undisputed validity ; nor again is it only the necessity for remembrance that the position is, however inevitably, irregular ; and that we must neither regard our isolation as splendid, nor presume upon it. The attacks upon our orthodoxy, and the accusations of lack of guidance and principles, should teach us lessons which are more extensive in themselves and of greater practical importance. In the case of these, I have already tried to indicate certain criticisms, which seem to be implied by the general position I have put before you. May I remind you, if these criticisms seem serious, that they are *relatively* superficial, that things have moved surprisingly fast in the directions indicated, and thirdly, that real difficulties exist. The problems of doctrinal authority, and those raised by modern criticism, are not really met by alternative systems : and only an imperfect historical insight can find adequate parallels by which to decide present questions of discipline.

One point demands special attention. The Anglican Church has to face the very general desire for greater unity which inspires various Protestant bodies. In view of what I have already said, may I emphasize that much might be done to facilitate eventual union with these, without sacrifice of principle. I have urged that if there is any one task to which the Anglican Church would appear to be called, it is the building of a liberal Catholic Church. Such a duty implies in the first place the obligation to take advan-



tage of any opportunity for reunion on traditional lines. It does not, however, stop there. We have to remember, that until we have become more frank in our acceptance of Catholic experience, we cannot rightly afford to do all which might otherwise be possible ; for we cannot altogether trust our judgment, or expect others to do so. We must be very slow to concede what are, *or may be*, matters of obligation. On the other hand, we have no shadow of right to stand out for what is merely traditional with us, or matters of convenience.

Two examples are obvious. Prelacy, as it exists in England, is no sense of the *esse* of Catholicism ; it may be doubted if it is of the *bene esse*. If union can be promoted in any degree by a restoration of synodical government, and by bishops sharing the common penury of the clergy, then those in authority do well to be very jealous as to the adequacy of the arguments for present practice. Again, we have no right to treat as a fetish the parochial system. Mediaeval departures from this, may have been fraught with many drawbacks ; but it is doubtful if on the whole the gain was not greater than the loss ; and it is at least as doubtful whether in future the parochial system should not in some measure be sacrificed. A nonconformist body, as now existent, and assuming orthodoxy, transgresses Catholic principle only in asserting an identical character with the Church, by individual separation from the Church's rites, and by celebrating the Eucharist. Wesleyanism, for instance, in its earlier form, was in a wholly



legitimate position, save for the absence of official recognition which might well have been given. There is nothing to prevent such bodies existing in independence of any direct control, their unordained ministers recognized, and licensed to preach, and some ordained for the celebration of their Eucharists. Inconvenience would no doubt arise, but it would be infinitely less serious than schism. What is required essentially is orthodoxy, that individuals should accept the Church's rites, and that celebration of the Eucharist should not be apart from normal Church authority, and so should be by men episcopally ordained. In time, although not very shortly, a stage may come, when, not only for the sake of unity, certain nonconformists might desire some such solution. Anglican authority has the task of considering what could be done on our side to give the independence and freedom which is so much, and rightly, valued.

It has been said that orthodoxy is essential; and here lies the main practical difficulty. I have not merely in mind such tendencies as may exist in certain nonconformist quarters to go beyond even Anglican liberalism in the desire for inclusive formulas. The objective alike for ourselves, and for those who seek union with us, should be not merely a Church open to such criticism as may now be brought against Anglicanism, but a Church which undeniably gives full weight to Catholic experience, as well as to honesty of thought. As a result, union can hardly be pressed, and in any case is not likely to be widely sought, until closer agreement is reached in regard to

worship, the ministry, and the sacraments. There again there is no small obligation to do what is possible to remove difficulties, and to improve and deepen our own conceptions in order that such difficulties may have less justification.

Liturgical worship has to be presented not as an alternative, but as a complement. It is not one form of prayer among many, but an outcome of the fact that, when worship becomes corporate, it tends to assume a special character, other than that natural for individuals or on any particular occasion. Such worship has evolved as, and is, the prayer of a body corporate by the mouths of individuals, rather than immediately the prayer of individuals. In the case of the Church, which has more than a natural corporate life and quasi-personality, liturgical worship has in consequence a unique significance. Such a view removes devotional difficulties suggested by the peculiar and sometimes archaic character of the Church's services. We are taught not merely to say, but to specialize in our minds, prayers necessarily general; and in the use of psalter and lectionary to find particular lessons for ourselves, and dwell on these, rather than give a mechanical attention to all. We welcome, even in the Choir Offices, musical and ceremonial expression of the fact that these are more than the prayers of certain men. On the other hand, such a view is not only helpful in regard to liturgical worship itself, it serves also to make clear that there is room for other types.

In regard to the ministry, much has already been

done by the growth of the idea of a ministerial and representative priesthood; and if this needs to be kept clear of any view which makes the ministry merely delegates, its value is safeguarded in an organic conception of the Church. The priest's ministrations have their significance, not in any magical power, but in virtue of his function in that Society. Indeed, their most peculiar significance depends directly on the smallness of his part. In acts of Christian love, in advice, in teaching, priest and layman alike can never perfectly mediate the will of our Lord, because they are themselves imperfect. In consecration, absolution, blessing, the priest only does so, because his rôle is merely that of mouthpiece. What is peculiar to him is no magical gift, but simply a necessary commission.

In regard to the sacraments, much of the difficulty felt, both within and outside the Church of England, can be met by developing the line of thought which has just been indicated. The sacraments are, for example, no compelling of God, because they are the execution of His command; because they have their significance simply as such; and because they mediate the opportunity of grace, and not, apart from the co-operation of the will, grace itself. It is a tragedy of Christendom that the difficulty, which most remains, is in regard to what should be the sacrament of unity. It may well be emphasized, however, that the acute nature of Eucharistic controversies very largely results from a general sense of the importance both of the Sacrament, and of the issues involved.

I have spoken at some length of the claims of institutional Christianity, and of some of the current controversies to which these give rise. I can only touch, in conclusion, on a problem which is of great and increasing importance, which vitally affects our conception of the Church, and which is viewed in very different lights by various religious bodies. I mean, of course, the relation of the Christian Church to society. I have not in mind the particular question of Establishment. That is a secondary question, and it is also one which I have little power to discuss. A Scotch Episcopalian may, however, be forgiven, if he reminds you that a firm belief in establishment is not necessarily dependent on acceptance of the established religion. The moral is, however, not the greater breadth of mind of Anglicans and Roman Catholics, who hold such a position; but the somewhat grim lesson that social persecution leaves a greater bitterness than harsher measures. There is really a far deeper problem in regard to the relation of the Church and society. There are two extreme views. On the one hand Catholicism issues sometimes in a conception, wholly "other worldly," which cares little about present conditions; and fails to recognize that, if these are only temporal, they are yet capable of amelioration and involve real duties. The world may be merely a school for eternity, but we best profit from a school in the measure in which we attempt to grapple with its problems. In the opposite direction you have the view which insists that, since the Church should embody the highest

morality, it must seek to lead in social and economic reform. That is a cherished conviction of much English nonconformity. It is also a conviction which, if we regard the Christian Church as the symbol of our Lord's presence and authority, implies an ideal very closely approximating to that of Mediaeval Christianity. The Hierarchy should reign, even if it need not necessarily govern.

I have not time to criticize that ideal in detail. You will find it picturesquely expressed in a work of the late Mgr. R. H. Benson ; and if you read "The Dawn of All," you will probably find the picture as unconvincing as in some ways it is attractive. It is not easy, however, to work out consistently another position, which does equal justice to the claims of the Church, but does not minimize the claims of secular society. It must be done by insistence that the Church is in the world ; but that it is not of the world ; and that the world is real. The Church is concerned with motives, not with their application to secular problems. Poverty, for example, is for the Church an index of selfishness, and an opportunity for charity. Its general removal, however, is not an end in itself for the Church : it is so, for society. The Church is bound to tell men that they have duties to society, for which complete devotion to religion is only rarely a substitute ; but it is not directly concerned with the ends with which these duties are concerned. In such ideal conditions as Mgr. Benson pictures the visible triumph of Christianity should consist in universal allegiance to an institutional Church, universal participation in its



religious life. The result would only be misleading, if the Church appeared to reign over secular affairs.

I have said that the problem is of increasing importance. It is so, not because we are approaching such an ideal, but because we are continually faced with problems involving the same principles. Again and again it seems obvious that Christian motives imply particular political action. If the view I have put is correct, that is a matter for Christian citizens, but not directly for the Church as such.











